NATION

WB docs give Wednesday deadline to end rape probe

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India's weight on MSCI equity index rises to record high

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SPORTS

This EPL will have a different look when the season starts on Friday

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 14 AUGUST 2024 | WEDNESDAY | BENGALURU | 8 SAFAR, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 202 | Pages: 8

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CBI to probe doc's rape as protesters fume

Autopsy reveals trainee doc was subjected to 'genital torture'; HC raps Bengal cops

Doctors and citizens protest against the rape and murder of trainee doctor in Jammu, Kolkata, Hubballi and Varanasi on Tuesday **PHOTOS: PTI**

KOLKATA, 13 AUG

The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday ordered transfer of the investigation into the alleged rape and murder of a woman postgraduate trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital here from the Kolkata Police to the CBI.

The order came a day after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee vowed to transfer the case to the central

The body of the postgraduate trainee, who was allegedly raped and murdered inside a seminar hall of the state-run hospital, was found on Friday morning. A civic volunteer was arrested in this connection on Saturday.

A division bench presided by Chief Justice T S Sivagnanam also urged agitating doctors in the state to consider calling off their cease work.

Passing the order, the court said even after five days, no significant progress had been made in the investigation into the case by the Kolkata Police.

The court said that it was "quite disturbing" that the police had registered an unnatural death case in this connection.

> **It was irresponsible of the girl to go to the seminar hall alone at night**
> - Dr Sandip Ghosh, Principal of RG Kar Medical College

"When the deceased victim was a doctor working at the hospital, it is rather surprising as to why the principal of the hospital administration did not lodge a formal complaint," the court said, holding that in its view, this was a "serious lapse giving room for suspicion".

The court also noted that statements of the then principal, superintendent and deputy superintendent of the hospital were not recorded by the police till the matter came up for hearing before the court on Tuesday. Sandip Ghosh, was not proactive after learning of the death of the woman doctor, who worked there.

Ghosh has been asked to go on a long leave by the court.

The court also expressed surprise that within the shortest possible time, he was reinstated as principal of another medical college in the city after he tendered his resignation on Monday.

Meanwhile, The post-mortem report of the trainee doctor who was raped and murdered in Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital has revealed that she was subjected to "genital torture".

The victim was throttled before being smothered to death. Her thyroid cartilage was found to be broken because of the strangulation.

Per the report, there were injuries to the woman's belly, lips, fingers and left leg. The rape and murder took place between 3 am and 5 am on August 9. The victim's mouth was covered and her head was pushed against a wall or the floor to stop her from screaming or calling for help. The woman was bleeding from her eyes, mouth and private parts.

—PTI

>>>More on Page 4

In chat with Trump, Musk says Nagasaki bombing not wrong

WASHINGTON DC, 13 AUG

Elon Musk has been accused of underplaying America's atomic bombing of Japan's Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II during his chat with Donald Trump. United States Republican presidential nominee and former president Trump returned to X as he attempts to recover from a rocky couple of weeks on the campaign trail. On Monday, he marked the occasion by sitting down for a chat on Spaces with platform owner Elon Musk, who has publicly endorsed Trump's campaign for re-election. "Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed but now they are full cities again," the multibillionaire owner of Tesla, SpaceX and X said. "It is not as scary as people think, basically," Musk added. ***—Agencies***

>>>More on Page 6

BJP's Jagdambika to head joint panel on Waqf bill

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Senior BJP Lok Sabha member Jagdambika Pal was on Tuesday named chairperson of the joint committee of Parliament, which will examine the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill. A Lok Sabha notification said Speaker Om Birla appointed Pal as the head of the 31-member committee. Amid protests by the opposition in the Lok Sabha on its provisions, the government had decided to refer the bill to a joint committee of the two Houses. The joint panel has 31 members. ***—PTI***

>>>More on Page 4

Committee starts applications for Hajj 2025

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

India's quota for 2025 Hajj remained the same as 2024 at 1,75,025 as Minister for Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju opened the process for applying for the pilgrimage through the Hajj Committee of India on Tuesday. For the first time, the applications have been invited on the Hajj Suvidha App in addition to the website of Haj Committee of India, an official statement said. A helpline of the Hajj Committee of India along with dedicated channels on the social media are being operationalised to help the pilgrims applying for Hajj-2025. The government has been continuously striving to make the Hajj pilgrimage easier. ***—PTI***

SC closes contempt case against Ramdev, Patanjali

While the apex court accepted their apology and closed the matter, it cautioned Patanjali to abide by the terms **PHOTOS: PTI/ WIKIPEDIA**

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

In a relief to yoga guru Ramdev, his aide Balkrishna and Patanjali Ayurved Limited, the Supreme Court on Tuesday closed the contempt proceedings initiated against them for "violation" of the undertakings given before the court in the misleading advertisements case.

While the apex court accepted their apology and closed the matter, it cautioned them to strictly abide by the terms of their undertakings.

The contempt proceedings was initiated by the top court which is hearing a plea filed by the Indian Medical Association alleging a smear campaign against the Covid vaccination drive and modern systems of medicine.

The alleged non-adherence to the specific assurance and subsequent media statements by the firm had irked the apex court, which later issued notice to them to show cause as to why contempt proceedings be not initiated against them. It noted they also took steps to publicise the apology tendered by them through advertisements published prominently in the national and regional newspapers.

Referring to the first affidavit filed by Balkrishna tendering an unqualified apology on behalf of Patanjali, the bench noted it had rejected the same for the reason that he had tried to justify his conduct by seeking to offer an explanation for the advertisements issued. "As already observed by this court, there cannot be a justification and an apology. The two things are incompatible and do not go hand-in-hand," it said.

The bench noted that thereafter, fresh affidavits were filed by Balkrishna and Ramdev in April wherein an unconditional and unqualified apology was tendered for the breach of statement recorded in the 21 November, 2023 order.

—PTI

NOW ON 16 AUG

Vinesh's hearing deferred again

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Suspense continued on the fate of Vinesh Phogat's appeal against her Olympic disqualification with the ad-hoc division of the Court of Arbitration for Sport extending the time limit to deliver its decision till 16 August without specifying the reasons for continuing to defer the matter.

The 29-year-old was disqualified from the women's 50kg free-style final for being 100gm overweight at the time of weigh-in on Wednesday last week.

This is the third deferment in the case and no reasons have been given.

In her appeal, Vinesh has demanded that she be given a joint silver with Cuban wrestler Yusneylis Guzman Lopez, who had lost to her in the semi-finals but was promoted to the final following the Indian's disqualification.

Vinesh's legal team has French lawyers Joelle Monlouis, Estelle Ivanova, Habbine Estelle Kim and Charles Amson who helped her and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) during the filing of the application. Interestingly, the IOA had sent out invites for an online press conference with its president PT Usha and Salve at the exact same time at which the verdict was expected this evening. That invite was withdrawn within minutes of the CAS statement.

—PTI

Vinesh Phogat has demanded that she be given a joint Silver with Cuban wrestler Yusneylis Guzman Lopez **PHOTO: PTI**

Para Shuttler Bhagat suspended for 1.5 year, to miss Paralympics

Tokyo gold medallist Indian para shuttler Pramod Bhagat will not be able to defend his title at the Paris Paralympics after he was handed a 18- month suspension for breaching Badminton World Federation's (BWF) anti-doping whereabout clause. "In 1 March 2024, the Court of Arbitration of Sport (CAS) Anti-Doping Division found Bhagat in breach of the BWF anti-doping regulations for committing three whereabouts failures within 12 months," the governing body said. The 36-year-old, an SL3 athlete, had appealed this decision to the CAS Appeals Division but it was rejected last month. "On 29 July 2024, the CAS Appeals Division dismissed the Bhagat's appeal and confirmed the CAS Anti-Doping Division decision of 1 March 2024. His period of ineligibility is now in effect," the statement added.

UP STUDENT RAPED IN MOVING CAR, LEFT ON HIGHWAY

LUCKNOW, 13 AUG

A final-year engineering student was allegedly abducted and raped by her senior in a moving car on Saturday evening. The horrific incident took place in the Lucknow's Sikandra area of the city.

The victim, a student of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar University, reported the crime to the Sikandra police station on Sunday. According to her complaint, she was standing near the Kargil intersection when her senior forced her into his car.

The accused then drove away, pulling down the car curtains and tying the victim's hands and legs before committing the crime.

To avoid attracting attention, he reportedly turned up the car's music to a high volume.

After the assault, the woman was abandoned on the roadside in a semi-nude state. She managed to seek help and return home.

The accused, a former student of the university, is said to have harboured feelings for the victim, which she had rejected. In retaliation, he allegedly filed a false complaint against her with the department head, leading to the withholding of her marksheet.

Sikandra police said that the accused will be nabbed soon.

—Agencies

IN AN UNUSUAL MOVE

India orders recall of Apple antitrust report

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Competition Commission has recalled the investigation report in the case related to alleged anti-competitive practices of technology major Apple to protect the "legal rights of all parties involved". The rare move by the regulator has come amid concerns raised by Apple that confidential information related to its business was part of the probe report that was sent to the parties involved in the case, sources said on Tuesday.

When contacted, Competition Commission of India (CCI) Secretary Inder Pal Singh Bindra told PTI that the directions issued to the Director General are procedural in nature to protect the legal rights of all parties involved. The sources said the regulator has asked the DG to remove the confidential business information from the non-confidential report.

Earlier, India had found that the technology major allegedly violated competition norms with respect to its App Store **PHOTO: PTI**

Under the competition law, the regulator orders a detailed probe by its Director General (DG) against a company in case there is prima-facie evidence of violations. Once the probe report is submitted to CCI, the non-confidential version of the report is shared with the company and other parties concerned for their responses.

After receiving the responses, CCI will start the final hearings and then pass the final order in the case.

The response was to queries about the reasons for the regulator's decision to recall the investigation report and whether certain confidential details inadvertently become part of the report that was sent to the parties in the case.

The sources said the non-confidential report sent to the parties contained certain confidential business information of Apple and the company had complained about it. Subsequently, CCI decided to recall the probe report, they added. An e-mail sent to Apple for comments did not elicit a response. Earlier, CCI sought a reply from Apple on the investigation report. which has found that the technology major allegedly violated competition norms with respect to its App Store. *—PTI*

Fresh plea in SC against Adani in Hindenburg row

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

A fresh plea has been filed in the Supreme Court following the recent Hindenburg issue as the petitioner complained of the Supreme Court Registrar's alleged refusal to register the petition and urged the top court to direct the registry to register his miscellaneous application seeking compliance with the earlier top court's order.

The fresh plea stated that due to the recent Hindenburg controversy, it becomes incumbent for SEBI to conclude the pending investigations and declare the conclusion of the investigations.

Advocate Vishal Tiwari has moved the fresh plea urging to allow his appeal against the lodgement order dated 5 August, 2024, of the Registrar and to direct the registry to register the miscellaneous application. The petition also stated that the Registrar of the top court has refused to Register Miscellaneous Application under Order XV Rule 5 of the Supreme Court Rules 2013 on the grounds of no reasonable cause for registration.

> **@narendramodi @PMOIndia @ FinMinIndia @nsitharaman Sir to avoid unnecessary controversies about financial markets in future, PI have a Rule that all Regulators should appear at least 2 times a year, or on special occasions, before a Joint Parliamentary Public Finances committee in open court to answers questions and give testimony as in the US.**
> -Mohandas Pai, former Infosys CFO

—ANI

NIMHANS doctors protest over Kolkata medico's rape

BENGALURU, 13 AUG

Resident doctors of National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences staged a protest on Tuesday at the DPNR building within the NIMHANS campus, demanding judicial probe into the sexual assault and murder of a 31-year-old trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College. They also demanded acceptance of doctor's demands, an accelerated passage of the Central Protection Act to ensure robust protection for doctors and a firm guarantee against any physical aggression towards protesting doctors.—*Salar News*

Sowmya Reddy is prez of Karnataka Mahila Cong

BENGALURU, 13 AUG

Former Jayanagar MLA Sowmya Reddy was on Tuesday appointed as the next President of Karnataka Mahila Congress. Sowmya, the daughter of Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, contested Lok Sabha election 2024 and lost from Bengaluru South. Sowmya will replace Pushpa Amarnath, who is on an extension after she was appointed to the post in November 2018.
—*Salar News*

Yellow alert issued for City till Saturday

Coastal Karnataka to record moderate rain

BENGALURU, 13 AUG

India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for Bengaluru and surrounding districts from Wednesday to Saturday, forecasting rainfall ranging between 64.5mm and 115.5mm. According to the IMD alert, from 14 to 17 August, Coastal Karnataka will record moderate rain.

Scattered heavy to isolated very heavy rain is expected in Ramanagara, Tumakuru, Chitradurga and Chikkaballapur districts. Isolated heavy rain and thunderstorms are likely in Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Hassan, Chikkamagaluru, Mandya and Mysuru districts. Light to moderate rain will occur in Koppal, Gadag, Haveri and Dharwad districts, with moderate rain expected across most of South Interior Karnataka and light rain in North Interior Karnataka.

Weather expert BS Patil said the heavy rainfall is not confined to Bengaluru alone but will also impact other regions, including the southern and northern hinterlands.

Heavy rainfall is expected in Ramanagara, Tumakuru, Chitradurga and Chikkaballapur districts **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

- Weather expert BS Patil said the heavy rainfall is not confined to City alone but will also impact other regions, including the southern and northern hinterlands

Southwest Monsoon was reported as normal over Interior Karnataka and weak over Coastal Karnataka. On Tuesday, rainfall was recorded at Rayalpadu in Kolar district (9 cm), Talikote in Vijayapura district (6 cm), and Sindhanur in Raichur district (5 cm). Other notable rainfall totals include 4cm in Nalwatwad (Vijayapura district), 3cm in Midigeshi (Tumakuru district) and Hunchadakatte (Shivamogga district).
—*Salar News*

INSPECTION ON

Fix Tungabhadra dam gate in 4 days: CM tells officials

KOPPAL, 13 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said he has asked officials and experts to fix within three to four days the damaged crest gate of Tungabhadra reservoir so that water from expected rains can be stored.

After inspecting the dam, he also assured that there is no need for farmers to worry.

One of the crest gates (19th gate) of the Tungabhadra reservoir in Koppal district was washed away after its chain link snapped on Friday midnight, following which the downstream areas were put on alert, as a huge quantity of water was being released.

He assured that there won't be any problem for farmers in the three states -- Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, who have sown crops, as water is flowing through all the canals and there will be any damage to crops.

The dam is managed by the Tungabhadra Board with representatives from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana government representatives being its members; the Central Water Commission (CWC) appointee is the Chairman. Noting that the dam construction work began in 1948 and got completed in 1953, and from 1954 water is being released to canals.

This year the dam had received 115 tmcft of water out of which 25 tmcft was released through canals for fields of farmers in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, he said. "For the first crop, 90 tmcft water is required and the dam currently has 90 tmcft of water. As of today there won't be any trouble for the first crop." The gate to be installed and the repair work to be completed, he further said, adding that "The work has began since yesterday, gate will be ready tomorrow, Narayana Engineering, Hindustan Engineering and Jindal are involved in the work ."

To a question as to who will be held responsible for the incident, Siddaramaiah said it will be looked into. —*PTI*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah inspects the broken cluster gate of the Tungabhadra Dam in Hosapete, on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Ex-MP demands action on excess silt in TB dam

BENGALURU, 13 AUG

Former Lok Sabha member VS Ugrappa has once again appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to address critical issues related to Tungabhadra Dam in Ballari parliamentary constituency.

Ugrappa said he had written letters to Centre and State governments and Tungabhadra Development Board in August 2023. But no action had been taken by anyone of them, so far. In a letter sent on 11 August, 2023, the former MP had raised two concerns with regard to the dam: the accumulation of silt in the dam and the underutilisation of excess water from its catchment area.

He said Tungabhadra Dam, constructed in 1953 at Hosapete, was originally designed to store 132 TMC (thousand million cubic feet) of water. Over the past 70 years, more than 33 TMC of silt has accumulated, reducing the dam's storage capacity to below 100 TMC. Ugrappa had said the silt build-up had led to a loss of water, which could otherwise be used for irrigation and drinking.

The former MP had then appealed to the Prime Minister to act to resolve these issues, and proposed that water from the dam be declared a national asset and it be recognised as a National Irrigation Project. He had also urged Central government to allocate sufficient funds for removing accumulated silt and for constructing balancing reservoirs to utilise the excess water.

Speaking to Salar News on Tuesday, Ugrappa said his plea to the Centre had fallen on deaf ears and his proposal to declare the dam and water a nation asset had been largely ignored.

Ugrappa called for an assessment by Tungabhadra Dam Board to determine the feasibility of silt removal and to formulate an action plan for effective water utilisation. Ugrappa's letter, a copy of which has been accessed by Salar News, had underscored the urgency of addressing these longstanding issues to ensure that the benefits of Tungabhadra Dam's water resources are fully realised for the people of Karnataka and the surrounding regions.

The catchment area of the Tungabhadra Dam spans around 28,180 square kilometres, generating an estimated 432 TMC of water annually. According to the tribunal's award, Karnataka is allocated 65 per cent of this water, while Andhra Pradesh and Telangana share the remaining 35 per cent. Despite this allocation, more than 200 TMC of excess water continues to flow downstream into the sea, unused by the states.
—*Salar News*

State seeks to vacate court stay against Chamundeshwari Act

BENGALURU, 13 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said State government will seek to vacate the stay by High Court against the implementation of Chamundeshwari Kshetra Development Authority Act of 2024.

Karnataka High Court had stayed the implementation of the act, after a member of the erstwhile Mysuru royal family — Pramoda Devi Wadiyar — challenged its legality.

Passed in February, the act aims to provide for constituting an independent statutory authority to undertake the "development and maintenance" of 'Shree Chamundeshwari Kshethra'.

Home Minister G Parameshwara said authorities are formed for certain temples to ensure effective administration, as more money gets collected there, and also to provide good facilities to many devotees who visit them.

"Money gets collected there, the government also gives money. To manage the administration, if an authority is there it will be better. So it was done in the case of Chamundi hills... They (royal family) have said it should not be done, the court will examine," he told reporters here. The interim stay was first granted on 26 July by Justice SR Krishna Kumar, who ordered that "....without prejudice to both the parties and by way of an interim arrangement, respondents are directed not to give effect to the impugned Act, till the next date of hearing." The stay was then extended on 1 August by Justice Hemant Chandangoudar, and the case is scheduled to be heard again on 22 August.

High Court had stayed the implementation of the act, after a member of the erstwhile Mysuru royal family challenged its legality **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Pramoda Devi Wadiyar termed the Act "unconstitutional" contending that Chamundi Hill is their private property. She has alleged that the government had enacted it with an intention to take over the ownership, control and management of Chamundeshwari temple and other temples in Chamundi Hills under the guise of development and maintenance. —*PTI*

SEARCHES IN KIADB UNEARTH CASH, DOCUMENTS

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Digital devices, Rs 1.5 crore in cash and documents were seized following searches carried out in a money-laundering case linked to an alleged fraud in land acquired by the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) for projects such as the Hubballi airport and IIT-Dharwad, the ED said on Tuesday.

The raids were carried out on August 9-10 at a dozen premises in Bengaluru and Dharwad, including at the KIADB head office in Bengaluru and zonal office in Dharwad. The money-laundering case stems from an FIR lodged by the Vidyagiri police station in Dharwad under various Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections against "main accused" V D Sajjan (a former special land acquisition officer of the KIADB-Dharwad) and others. The police case was later transferred to the CID, Dharwad. However, these individuals were compensated previously, thus causing loss to the government exchequer, the ED said. —*PTI*

BMTC bus rams into multiple vehicles on Hebbal flyover

BENGALURU, 13 AUG

A Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) Volvo bus lost control on Hebbal flyover on Monday morning, ploughing through cars and two-wheelers.

The bus, identified as KA57F1797 from Depot-25, was travelling from Kempegowda International Airport towards HSR Layout. At 9.25am, the bus veered off course and rear-ended two motorcycles before crashing into a car and an SUV near Esteem Mall on Airport Road, according to a CCTV footage.

Although no fatalities were reported, the riders of the motorcycles sustained injuries and have been hospitalised. The extent of their injuries was being assessed.

BMTC has launched an investigation to determine the cause of the accident. Initial speculation suggests two possible reasons: a potential brake failure or driver negligence.

Sunitha B Jayappa, Public Relations Officer of BMTC, told Salar News, "We suspect that this was a brake failure. The driver named Rajakumar is under suspension for negligent driving and we will take further action based on our findings."
—*Salar News*

CCTV footage shows the driver ramming the bus into multiple vehicles **PHOTO: X/@MADHURIADNAL**

HDK hits out at Khandre over HMT forest land row

BENGALURU, 13 AUG

Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy on Tuesday hit out at Minister Eshwar Khandre over his administrative note giving 'clear instructions' to the State Forest Department to initiate measures to recover 281 acres from Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT) Limited contending that it was a forest land.

He asked the Minister to "shed his pettiness" and cooperate with him to revive 'the pride of Bengaluru', which once ruled the watch market with 90 per cent market share but now was on the verge of closure.

HD Kumaraswamy **PHOTO: PTI**

He was referring to Khandre's 9 August administrative note where he cited the 11 June, 1896 gazette notification showing that 599 acres in the survey number 1 in Peenya-Jalahalli in Bengaluru was forest land. He said there are no records to show that the said land was gifted to HMT as has been said. Citing the Supreme Court ruling, "Once a forest is always a forest – Environment is more important than civil rights", the Forest Minister had asked the Additional Chief Secretary (Forest, Wildlife and Ecology department) to initiate steps to recover 281 acres of vacant land out of 599 acres of HMT land.

Khandre's move came days after Kumaraswamy visited HMT Limited and had a meeting with its officials for its revival. Rubbishing the Forest Minister's claim, Kumaraswamy, JD(S) second-in-command, said the HMT plant that was visited by the first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, former prime ministers Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi was set up by acquiring the land way back in 1958-59 and 1968-70. According to him, the HMT made a profit of Rs 270 crore. With these funds, HMT set up its units in Hyderabad, Uttarakhand, Ajmer and Kerala. —*PTI*

FULL DRESS REHEARSAL

Manekshaw Parade Ground gears up for I-Day celebrations

BENGALURU, 13 AUG

Around 1,150 security personnel from 35 contingents will take part in the parade as part of 78th Independence Day celebrations at Field Marshal Manekshaw Parade Ground on Cubbon Road here on Thursday.

The ceremony will start at 9am with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah hoisting the national flag and presiding over the proceedings.

The parades are carried out by Karnataka State Reserve Police, Central Reserve Police Force, Border Security Force, City Armed Reserve, Goa Police, Karnataka State Industrial Security Force, Traffic Police, Women Police, Home Guards, Tropical Wardens, Fire Brigade, Dog Squad and Band. A stage has been constructed and a flag pole has been erected for the 15 August celebrations, a statement by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike said. After the hoisting the flag, the Chief Minister will inspect the parade in an open jeep, address the audience, and oversee the national anthem. The celebrations will also feature cultural programmes performed by school children, military regiments, local artists, including a para motor and motorcycle show. Besides, 64 families who have donated organs will be honoured with certificates by the Chief Minister during the celebrations.

Bengaluru Traffic Police have made traffic arrangements around the parade ground. Public parking is limited on Central Street, Cubbon Road and MG Road, with residents advised to use public transport to avoid congestion. Media personnel should use Gate No 04 for access to the media box, while the public with green passes is directed to use Gate No 05. For security reasons, attendees are requested to arrive by 8.30am. For any assistance, citizens are encouraged to call 112. —*Salar News*

Clockwise from top: School students wave National Flags; Police dog squad, a BSF contingent and school students practice during full dress rehearsal for the 78th Independence Day celebrations at Manekshaw Parade Ground in Bengaluru on Tuesday **PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD**

GST Council to meet on 9 September

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

The GST Council, chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, will meet on 9 September. "The 54th Meeting of GST Council will be held on 9th September, 2024 at New Delhi," the Council said in a post on X. The GST Council, comprising finance ministers of Centre and states, is the apex decision making body with regard to Goods and Services Tax (GST), which was rolled out on 1 July, 2017. The meeting is expected to start discussion on rate rationalisation, reducing tax slabs, besides removing duty inversion under GST. After the previous Council meeting on 23 June, Sitharaman had said the next meeting of the GST Council the Group of Ministers (GoM) on rate rationalisation under Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sumant Chaudhary, will give a presentation on the status of the work and aspects covered by the panel and work pending before the panel. *—PTI*

CPI(M) office in Kerala attacked, 4 detained

T'PURAM, 13 AUG

The ruling CPI (M) office in nearby Kattakkada was vandalised allegedly by a group of Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) activists here, police said on Tuesday. Four people were taken into custody soon after the attack and their arrests would be recorded soon, they said. There was some dispute between the workers of both parties in the area and it was suspected to have resulted in the attack on the Left party's office, police sources said. As per the complaint, the party office and furniture were vandalised and Left activists were attacked. Investigation is on and the exact reason behind the attack could be ascertained only after that, they added. *—PTI*

Tamil Nadu clears ₹44K cr project proposals

CHENNAI, 13 AUG

The Tamil Nadu Cabinet on Tuesday gave its approval for 15 investment proposals of a total value of Rs 44,125 crore that are expected to generate over 24,700 jobs in the state. The 16th cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister MK Stalin at the secretariat here also granted its nod to three renewable energy policies as part of a goal to achieve 20,000 MW power generation by 2030, according to Finance Minister Thangam Thennarasu here. Emerging from the meeting, Thennarasu said that on 17 August the Chief Minister would be inaugurating a first-of-its-kind-in-India industrial housing facility for 18,720 employees of Foxconn built at an estimated cost of Rs 706.5 crore at SIPCOT Vallam Vadagal industrial estate in Sriperumbudur, Kancheepuram district. The cabinet gave its nod for projects covering various sectors including electronics, food processing, motor vehicles and battery manufacturing. *—PTI*

Supriya's WhatsApp hacked: Case against one

PUNE, 13 AUG

The Pune police have registered a case against an unidentified person in connection with the hacking of the WhatsApp account of NCP (SP) Lok Sabha member Supriya Sule, an official said on Tuesday. The MP, who represents Baramati in Maharashtra's Pune district, in a post on X on Sunday claimed her phone and WhatsApp account were hacked and requested people not to call or message her. On Monday, Sule said she was being blackmailed after hackers demanded USD 400 from her team by sending a message following the hacking of her WhatsApp account. An official from Yawat police station said, "We have registered a case against an unidentified person under relevant provisions of the Information Technology Act. An investigation is underway." *—PTI*

Hindenburg: Cong announces nationwide protest on 22 Aug

Cong to organise mobilisation campaigns to push for JPC probe

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Amid the raging row over the Hindenburg allegations, the Congress on Tuesday announced that it will hold a nationwide agitation on 22 August demanding Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chief Madhabi Puri Buch's resignation and a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe into the Adani issue. Congress said that it will organise public mobilisation campaigns over its demands for Joint Parliamentary Committee probe (JPC).

The announcement was made after Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge held a meeting with all general secretaries, state unit Chiefs and AICC state in-charges here as the party gets battle-ready for the upcoming round of assembly polls to discuss organisational matters and various issues of national importance for election preparedness.

"The shocking revelations of a nexus between the SEBI and Adani needs a thorough investigation. The money of small investors in the stock market cannot be jeopardised," Kharge said on X. The Modi government must immediately seek the resignation of the SEBI Chairperson and constitute a JPC in this regard, he said.

Congress party General Secretary KC Venugopal, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi with other party leaders Mukul Wasnik and Ajay Maken in New Delhi on Tuesday *PHOTO: ANI*

Hindenburg Research on 10 August alleged that Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch had stakes in obscure offshore funds used in the alleged Adani money siphoning scandal.

The allegations have triggered a political slugfest with the Congress and other INDIA bloc parties demanding her removal and JPC probe while the BJP accused the opposition of being a part of a conspiracy to create financial instability and chaos in India.

Buch and her husband have dismissed the charges as baseless and alleged that Hindenburg Research was attacking capital markets regulator SEBI's credibility and attempting a character assassination of its chief instead of replying to a showcause notice served to it for "violations in India".

The Adani Group termed the allegations malicious and based on manipulation of select public information. The company said it had no commercial relationship with the SEBI Chairperson or her husband. *—PTI*

31-MEMBER COMMITTEE

BJP's Jagdambika to head joint Parl panel on Waqf bill

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

PHOTO: ANI

Senior BJP Lok Sabha member Jagdambika Pal was on Tuesday named Chairperson of the joint committee of Parliament, which will examine the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill.

A Lok Sabha notification said Speaker Om Birla appointed Pal as the head of the 31-member committee.

Amid protests by the opposition in the Lok Sabha on its provisions, the government had decided to refer the bill to a joint committee of the two Houses.

The joint panel has 31 members -- 21 from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha -- and will submit its report by the next session.

The 73-year-old Pal is a fourth-term MP from Uttar Pradesh and is seen as a lawmaker who enjoys warm cross-party relations.

The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on Friday last adopted a motion moved by Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, who also holds the parliamentary affairs portfolio, naming the members to be part of the committee.

A formal notification naming Pal as the chairperson of the joint committee is set to be issued shortly, the officials said.

In the Lower House, 12 members of the panel are from the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA), including eight from the BJP, and nine from the opposition. In the Upper House, four are from the BJP, four from the opposition, one from the YSRCP, which has opposed the Bill, and one is a nominated member. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Thursday last and referred to a joint committee of Parliament after a heated debate, with the government asserting the proposed law did not intend to interfere with the functioning of mosques. *—PTI*

Arvind Kejriwal; K Kavitha *PHOTOS: PTI/FB*

Court extends judicial custody of Kejri & Kavitha

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

A court here on Tuesday extended till 2 September the judicial custody of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, BRS leader K Kavitha and others in a money-laundering case related to the alleged excise scam.

Special Judge Kaveri Baweja extended the custody of the accused after they were produced before the court through a video-conference on the expiry of the period of their judicial custody granted earlier.

The Supreme Court had earlier granted interim bail to Kejriwal in the case. However, Kejriwal continues to be lodged in the Tihar jail here as he has not furnished the bail bond in the case. *—PTI*

I-DAY STANDOFF

'Kejri's direction for Atishi to hoist National Flag invalid'

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Amid uncertainty over who will hoist the National Flag during the official Delhi government function on Independence Day, the General Administration Department (GAD) here said Tuesday Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is in jail in a corruption case, cannot authorise minister Atishi to do so on his behalf.

GAD Minister Gopal Rai Monday directed the department to make arrangements for Atishi to unfurl the flag as the chief minister "desires". Responding to the minister's communication, GAD Additional Chief Secretary Navin Kumar Chaudhary said

PHOTO: PTI

the Kejriwal's direction is "legally invalid and cannot be acted upon".

The GAD officer has also said the chief minister's communication to Lt Governor V K Saxena on 6 August in this regard was "not permissible" according to the prison rules.

Chaudhary said preparations for the Independence Day function of the Delhi government was underway at its regular Chhatrasal Stadium venue. As Kejriwal is in judicial custody and not available to hoist the flag, the matter has been communicated to the "higher authority" and a directed is awaited, Chaudhary said.

Rai had issued his directions to the GAD on Monday after a meeting with Kejriwal in the jail. Meanwhile, senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia Tuesday assailed Lt Governor VK Saxena, saying there should be no problem with an elected minister doing it.

Sisodia said it is "very unfortunate" that "such petty politics" is being done on the auspicious occasion of Independence Day. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

KWATRA IS NEW AMBASSADOR TO US

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Vinay Mohan Kwatra has assumed charge as India's Ambassador to the US here and vowed that he and his team will continue to work intensely to strengthen the crucial partnership.

Kwatra, 61, who retired as India's Foreign Secretary on 14 July, arrived here in the US capital on Monday.

He succeeds Taranjit Singh Sandhu, who retired from the foreign service early this year and served as India's top diplomat in the US from 2020 to 2024. Kwatra was also India's Ambassador to France and Nepal, after which he was appointed as the Foreign Secretary in New Delhi. *—PTI*

Dera Chief gets 21-day furlough before Haryana polls, 10th in 4 yrs

CHANDIGARH, 13 AUG

Dera Sacha Sauda chief and rape convict Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh on Tuesday walked out of the Sunaria jail in Haryana's Rohtak after he was granted a 21-day furlough, which is tenth in four years.

During his temporary release period, Singh will stay at the Dera ashram in Barnawa in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat.

The Sirsa-headquartered Dera sect chief was granted the temporary release days after the Punjab and Haryana High Court disposed of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee's petition against Singh's temporary release.

The warrant also requires Singh to keep peace and maintain good behaviour. After the expiry of his 21-day furlough, Singh will have to surrender to the superintendent of the jail from which he was released to undergo the unexpired period of his sentence, it said.

Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh is serving a 20-year sentence for raping two of his disciples *PHOTO: PTI*

As per reports, the Dera chief has mostly got paroles and furloughs during the state Assembly and local body polls. This time also just before the Haryana Assembly elections the court gave him the 21-day furlough again.

He had been granted a 50-day parole on 19 January. The warrant also said that Singh would provide to the district magistrate concerned full particulars of the place where he intended to reside during the period of his temporary release at the time of his release and keep the official informed of any subsequent change in residence.

Singh is serving a 20-year sentence for raping two of his disciples and is lodged in the Sunaria jail in Haryana's Rohtak district. He was sentenced in 2017. *—PTI*

TAKE DOWN VIDEO OF ILMI: HC TO SARDESAI

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday directed veteran journalist Rajdeep Sardesai to take down an "objectionable" video from social media showing BJP leader Shazia Ilmi purportedly abusing a video journalist.

Justice Manmeet PS Arora passed the interim order on a plea by Ilmi claiming that she was defamed and her privacy violated by the cameraperson's act of recording her even when the news debate show was over and she had withdrawn her consent.

The Delhi High Court also issued notices to the defendants and has listed the matter for further hearing on 16 August. *—PTI*

Will fight Assembly polls in J&K, says Farooq Abdullah

JAMMU, 13 AUG

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Monday said he will fight the upcoming assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir and hoped that the Election Commission will announce the poll dates by the end of this month.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, however, refused to divulge which constituency he would contest the elections from.

Asked about the constituency he would fight from, he quipped, "Why should I tell you in advance? A general does not reveal his strategy and I am also a general and prepared to fight." *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Pakistani intruder shot dead by BSF along Punjab border

JALANDHAR, 13 AUG

A suspected Pakistani intruder trying to infiltrate into India from the Punjab border was shot dead by the BSF amid an ongoing "high alert" ahead of Independence Day.

A Border Security Force (BSF) spokesperson said the man was spotted "surreptitiously" crossing the international boundary in the Dal village of Tarn Taran district around 8:30pm on Monday and approaching the border fence.

He challenged the intruder but he did not stop and continued to advance towards the border security fence.

BSF has declared a high alert on the frontline from 10 August in the wake of Independence Day events on 15 August. *—PTI*

Made a mistake, says Ajit on fielding wife against cousin

MUMBAI, 13 AUG

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar has said he made a mistake by fielding his wife Sunetra Pawar against his cousin Supriya Sule in recent Lok Sabha polls.

One should not allow politics to enter home, Pawar, who is currently on a statewide 'Jan Samman Yatra', told Marathi news channel Jai Maharashtra.

As part of his mass outreach programme ahead of the state assembly polls, the Ajit has been promoting the government's 'Mukhyamantri Ladki Bahin Yojana', aimed at providing financial assistance of Rs 1,500 per month to women.

In Lok Sabha elections held earlier this year, Sunetra Pawar unsuccessfully contested the election from Baramati seat against sitting NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule, daughter of Ajit's uncle Sharad Pawar.

Sunetra was later elected to Rajya Sabha. In July last year, Ajit Pawar and a number of other MLAs joined the Shiv Sena-BJP government, leading to a split in the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) founded Sharad Pawar. "I love all my sisters. One shouldn't allow politics to enter homes. I made a mistake in fielding Sunetra against my sister. This shouldn't have happened. But the Parliamentary board (of NCP) made a decision. Now I feel it was wrong," Ajit said.

Ajit also said Sharad is a senior leader and head of their family and he would not respond to any criticism made by the latter. *—PTI*

12 SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT

Boeing to provide services to Indian Navy

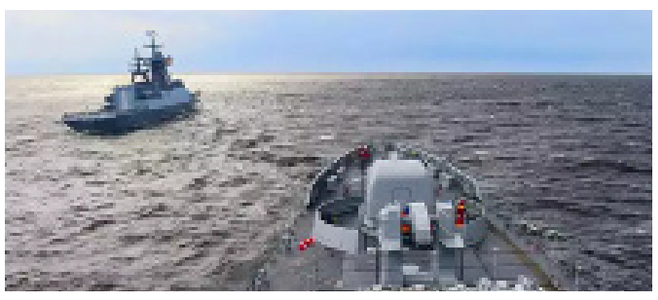
NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

US aerospace giant Boeing has partnered with India's AI Engineering Services Ltd to provide overhaul services to the Indian Navy's fleet of 12 P-8I maritime surveillance aircraft.

As part of the partnership, the first landing gear overhaul of a P-8I aircraft was recently completed at naval base INS Rajali in Tamil Nadu, Boeing India said on Tuesday.

"This is a first in India and reflects the growth in India's indigenous capabilities for undertaking complex Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) services," it said in a statement.

The Boeing P-8I, a multi-role long-range maritime reconnaissance anti-submarine warfare (LRMR ASW) aircraft, is integral to the Indian Navy's maritime surveillance missions in the Indian Ocean.



The first landing gear overhaul of a P-8I aircraft was recently completed at naval base INS Rajali in Tamil Nadu *PHOTO: PTI*

"Through this partnership with AIESL (AI Engineering Services Ltd), we continue to make strategic investments in India's MRO capabilities that enhance mission readiness rates for the Indian Navy," said Salil Gupte, president, Boeing India and South Asia.

"Developing local MRO capabilities is critical for reducing repair turnaround time and aircraft downtime, thereby improving the mission readiness of customer fleets," he said.

Sharad Agarwal, CEO, AI Engineering Services Limited, said, "We are proud to partner with Boeing, and for successfully completing the landing gear overhaul of the P-8I aircraft, a first in India. It is a significant step towards India's aspirations to become the regional hub for MRO services."

The Boeing India-AIESL partnership is the latest initiative under the Boeing India Repair Development and Sustainment (BIRDS) hub programme. *—PTI*

All Indian salt and sugar brands have microplastics: Study

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

All Indian salt and sugar brands, whether big or small, packaged or unpackaged, contain microplastics, according to a study published on Tuesday.

The study, "Microplastics in Salt and Sugar" and conducted by the environmental research organisation Toxics Link, tested 10 types of salt -- including table salt, rock salt, sea salt and local raw salt -- and five types of sugar purchased from both online and local markets.

The study revealed the presence of microplastics in all salt and sugar samples, in various forms, including fibre, pellets, films and fragments. The size of these microplastics ranged from 0.1 mm to 5 mm.

The highest levels of microplastics were found in iodised salt, in the form of multi-coloured thin fibre and films.

- The concentration of microplastics in the salt samples ranged from 6.71 to 89.15 pieces per kg of dry weight, the report said.

Toxics Link founder-director Ravi Agarwal said, "The objective of our study was to contribute to the existing scientific database on microplastics so that the global plastic treaty can address this issue in a concrete and focused manner."

The concentration of microplastics in the salt samples ranged from 6.71 to 89.15 pieces per kg of dry weight, the report said.

Iodised salt had the highest concentration of microplastics (89.15 pieces per kilogramme) while organic rock salt had the lowest (6.70 pieces per kilogramme), according to the study.

In sugar samples, the concentration of microplastics ranged from 11.85 to 68.25 pieces per kilogramme, with the highest concentration found in non-organic sugar.

Microplastics are a growing global concern because they can harm both health and the environment. These tiny plastic particles can enter the human body through food, water and air.

Recent research has found microplastics in human organs such as the lungs, heart, and even in breast milk and unborn babies.

Previous studies found that the average Indian consumes 10.98 grams of salt and around 10 spoons of sugar every day -- much higher than the World Health Organization's recommended limits. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Man kills woman, throws body into valley before suicide

KABIRDHAM, 13 AUG

A 38-year-old woman school teacher was killed and her body was thrown into a valley by her lover, who allegedly committed suicide later by jumping into a river in Chhattisgarh, police said on Tuesday. The landlord of the deceased accused was arrested on charges of helping him to hide the woman's body, they said. The murder took place on 2 August in Lolesara village in Bemetara district, but it came to light after the victim woman's mother lodged a missing person's complaint in adjoining Kabirdham district on 8 August, Kabirdham Additional Superintendent of Police Vikas Kumar told. *—PTI*

Court refuses to close INS Vikrant fund case

JAIPUR, 13 AUG

A local court here has refused to close a cheating case against BJP leader Kirit Somaiya and his son, noting further probe was necessary as police have not investigated what was done with funds collected by them to save the decommissioned naval aircraft carried Vikrant. The magistrate's court on 8 August refused to accept the closure report submitted by the Mumbai police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW). Commissioned in 1961, INS Vikrant, a Majestic-class aircraft carrier of the Indian Navy, played a key role in enforcing the naval blockade of East Pakistan during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971. It was decommissioned in 1997. In January 2014, the ship was sold through an online auction and scrapped in November that year.The complainant alleged Somaiya had collected more than Rs 57 crore for saving the ship. However, instead of depositing the amount to the Maharashtra governor's secretary office, he misappropriated the funds, he claimed. *—PTI*

Bihar man kills cop wife & children, hangs himself

BHAGALPUR, 13 AUG

Suspecting his constable wife of having an extra-marital affair, a man allegedly slit the throats of his spouse, two children and mother before hanging himself in Police Lines in Bihar's Bhagalpur. The Bihar Police constable posted at the SSP office in Bhagalpur has been identified as Neetu Kumari, while her husband was Pankaj. Police have not revealed the names of the three other deceased. A suicide note has been found at the spot, with Pankaj reportedly confessing to having murdered his wife, two children and mother, before killing himself. Talking to reporters, Bhagalpur Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Vivekanand said, "The incident might have taken place in the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday. *—PTI*

WB docs give Wednesday deadline to end rape probe

Bengal gets NHRC notice; doctors write to Nadda over safety

KOLKATA/LUCKNOW/ NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Junior doctors across West Bengal continued ceasework on Tuesday protesting the rape and murder of a woman doctor at a state-run medical college and hospital in Kolkata and demanding justice for her.

The stir affected healthcare services as long queues of patients were seen at out-patient departments (OPDs) of all government hospitals since early Tuesday morning as senior doctors were substituting their junior counterparts to address the rush.

The National Human Rights Commission has issued notices to the West Bengal government and the state's police chief in connection with a case of rape and murder of a woman doctor at a state-run medical college and hospital in Kolkata.

The Commission on Tuesday said it has sought the reports from these authorities in two weeks.

Doctors of Government Medical Collage and Hospital (GMCH) stage a protest against the rape and killing of a Kolkata based post-graduate trainee doctor, in Nagpur, Tuesday, Aug. 13, 2024 **PHOTO: PTI**

A doctors' association in Uttar Pradesh has written to Union Health Minister JP Nadda, pressing for security measures at medical institutions, even as medicos continued protests in the state.

The protests are being held for the second day in a row at different medical colleges in the state from Greater Noida in the west to Varanasi in the east and cities such as Kanpur, Jhansi, Agra, Gorakhpur besides state capital Lucknow.

The Uttar Pradesh RDA's president Dr Hardeep Jogi said, "The crime, which involved rape before the murder, underscores the severe inadequacies in campus security and overall safety," read the letter addressed to Nadda on Monday.

- The junior doctors have been pressing for magisterial probe into the killing of the woman doctor and removal of senior officials from RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

The agitating junior doctors, who have been pressing for magisterial probe into the killing of the woman doctor and removal of senior officials from RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, on Tuesday set a deadline of 14 August for the Kolkata Police to complete their investigation.

Women in Kolkata and other parts of Bengal will take to the streets on 15 August midnight as part of a massive protest. *—PTI*

'JAIL AN EXCEPTION'

'Bail is rule' for offences even under PMLA: SC

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

The legal principle 'Bail is rule, jail is an exception' is applicable to offences even under special statutes like the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled while granting bail to a man accused under the stringent anti-terror law.

A bench of justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih said if courts start denying bail in deserving cases, it will be a violation of fundamental rights.

"If courts start denying bail in deserving cases, it will be a violation of rights guaranteed under Article 21," the bench said while pronouncing its judgement.

The verdict came while releasing a man named Jalaluddin Khan on bail. Khan was booked under the stringent provisions of the UAPA and other sections of now defunct Indian Penal Code for renting out upper floor of his house to alleged members of the banned organisation Popular Front of India (PFI).

According to the National Investigation Agency, probe revealed that the criminal conspiracy was hatched with an intention to carry out acts of terror and

violence, leading to an atmosphere of terror and endangering the unity and integrity of the nation. In furtherance of their conspiracy, the accused arranged rented accommodation in Ahmad Palace in Phulwarisharif (Patna) and used its premises for imparting training in commission of acts of violence, and holding criminal conspiracy meetings.

The Bihar Police had received information about a plan of accused persons to cause disturbance during the proposed visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2022. *—PTI*

NATURE'S WRATH

5-member expert team to inspect landslides in Wayanad

An under-construction tunnel collapses following heavy rainfall in Shimla on Tuesday; A car moves through a waterlogged road following heavy rains, Gurgaon **PHOTOS: PTI**

WAYANAD, 13 AUG

A five-member expert team will visit the landslides-hit areas of the district on Tuesday to assess what caused the disaster that claimed over 200 lives.

The team will be led by senior scientist John Matthai of the National Center for Geosciences which has been assigned by the State Disaster Management Authority to inspect the landslide-hit areas in Wayanad Meppadi panchayat, a statement issued by the district administration said.

The team will assess the possible dangers in different parts of the disaster area and nearby sites. *—PTI*

Red alert on as rain batters Rajasthan, Himachal

Schools were shut in several Rajasthan districts on Tuesday as heavy rainfall continued to batter parts of the state where 22 people died in rain-related incidents in two days. For Tuesday, a 'red' warning is in place for Baran, Bundi, Kota and Tonk districts and an 'orange' alert for Bharatpur, Dausa, Dholpur, Jaipur and Karauli. Rain-induced landslides and flash floods led to the closure of 213 roads in Himachal Pradesh, with the local Met office issuing a 'yellow' warning for more heavy rainfall in isolated parts of the state till 19 August. *—PTI*

Why no law on unnatural sex: HC

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked the Centre to make its stand clear on the exclusion of penal provisions for the offences of unnatural sex and sodomy from the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS), which replaced the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The court said the legislature needs to take care of the issue of non-consensual unnatural sex.

"Where is that provision? There is no provision at all. It is not there. There has to be something. The question is that if it is not there, then is it an offence? If an offence is not there and if it is obliterated, then it is not an offence...

"Quantum (of punishment) we cannot decide but unnatural sex which is non-consensual needs to be taken care of by the legislature," a bench of acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela observed.

The court granted time to the Centre's counsel to seek instructions on the issue and listed the matter for further hearing on 28 August.

The court was hearing a PIL by Gantavya Gulati, a lawyer who was appearing in person, seeking to address the "exigent legal lacuna" resulting from the enactment of the BNS which has also led to the repeal of section 377 of the IPC.

The lawyer submitted that BNS excludes any provision equivalent to section 377 of the IPC due to which every person, especially the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community, will be affected. He also flagged alleged atrocities against those from the LGBTQ community.

Section 377 of IPC punished non-consensual unnatural sex between two adults, sexual activities against minors, and bestiality. *—PTI*

M'RASHTRA TO TURN 1L ACRES OF LAND TO FREEHOLD

MUMBAI, 13 AUG

The Maharashtra Cabinet on Tuesday cleared a proposal to convert class II land of more than 1 lakh acres in Marathwada into freehold, making the occupants complete owners. Nearly 1.4 lakh acres of land in Marathwada, comprising eight districts, was classified as class II. The class II status was a hurdle for occupants wishing to develop these areas, a government official said. Class II occupancy is a conditional holding where land is given to individuals for various reasons, including as rewards and to religious structures for their maintenance. The demand to convert the land to freehold is nearly 60 years old, he said. The cabinet's resolution to convert this land into freehold will have a positive impact on the current occupants, he said, adding that the occupants will have to remit a certain amount to the state government to effect the transition. *—PTI*

Man ties wife to bike, drags her in village

JAIPUR, 13 AUG

A woman in Rajasthan's Nagaur district was allegedly thrashed by her alcoholic husband, tied to a motorcycle and dragged around their village, police said on Tuesday.

A video purporting to show the woman tied to the motorcycle and being dragged behind it was circulated on social media, following which her husband was arrested.

Panchaudi police station assistant sub-inspector Surendra Kumar said the alleged incident occurred nearly a month ago in the Naharsinghpura village.

A video of the incident surfaced online on Monday.

His neighbours said Meghwal was an alcoholic and regularly thrashed his wife. *—PTI*

NGT forms panel to probe axing of tree for Kanwar road

SHAHJAHANPUR, 13 AUG

National Green Tribunal has formed a four-member joint panel to look into the allegations of illegal felling of trees for the construction of two lanes of 111km Kanwar route in Uttar Pradesh.

It also asked the state's chief secretary to ensure that there was no illegal felling of trees.

The NGT was hearing a matter regarding the alleged felling of more than 1 lakh trees and shrubs in the protected forest area across three forest divisions of Ghaziabad, Meerut, and Muzaffarnagar for the construction of the Kanwar road from Muradnagar (Ghaziabad district) to Purkaji (Muzaffarnagar district) near Uttarakhand border. *—PTI*

HC junks defamation plea by Shankaracharya

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Delhi High Court on Tuesday refused to grant any interim relief to Swami Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati, the Shankaracharya of Jyotish Peeth in Uttarakhand, in a defamation plea filed by him against Swami Govindananda Saraswati for allegedly making "objectionable" remarks against him.

Justice Navin Chawla, who was of the prima facie view that there was no defamation, said it was not appropriate to pass an injunction at this stage.

The High Court issued notice to the defendants on the interim relief application filed by Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati and listed the matter for further proceedings on 29 August. "These are in bad taste. I think he is just frustrated, but

PHOTO: PTI

I don't think there is any defamation," the judge observed.

The court further told the counsel for Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati, "You are a saint. Why are you worried about this? Saints should not be worried about all of this. They can't be defamed by any of this. Saints command respect through their own deeds." *—ANI*

'JUST GENETIC PARENTS'

Sperm, egg donor has no right on child: HC

MUMBAI, 13 AUG

A sperm or egg donor has no legal right on the child and cannot claim to be its biological parent, the Bombay High Court held on Tuesday while allowing a 42-year-old woman visitation rights to her five-year-old twin daughters.

The woman, in her plea, said her daughters, born via surrogacy, were living with her husband and younger sister, who was the egg donor.

The petitioner's husband had claimed since his sister-in-law was the egg donor, she had a legitimate right to be called a biological parent of the twins and that his wife had no right over them.

A single bench of Justice Milind Jadhav, however, refused to accept this contention, citing that though the petitioner's younger sister was the egg donor, she has no legitimate right to claim that she is a biological parent of the twins.

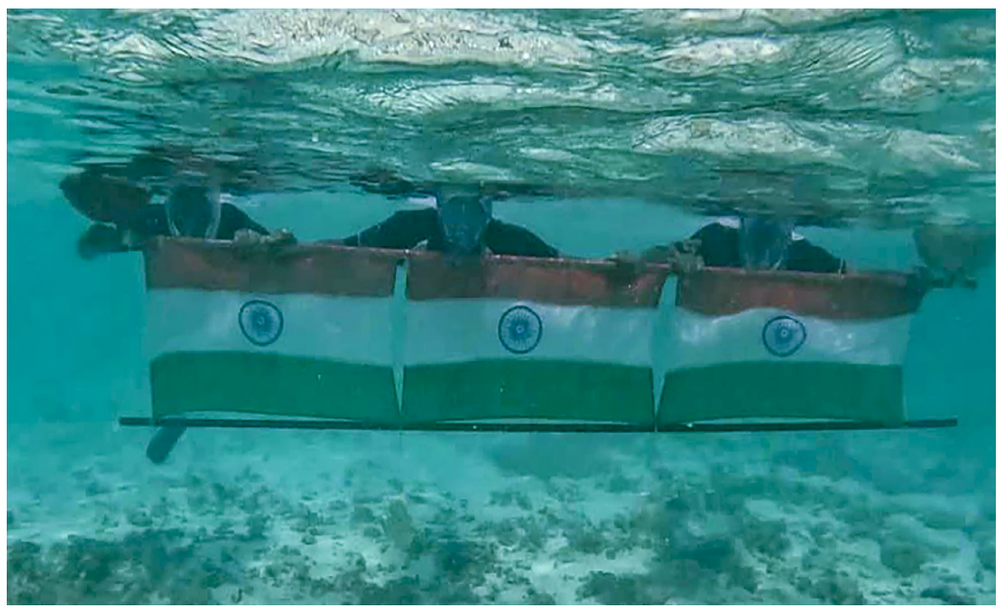
The woman, in her plea, said her daughters, born via surrogacy, were living with her husband and younger sister, who was the egg donor **PHOTO:X**

An advocate appointed to assist the court in the matter informed it that since the estranged couple's surrogacy agreement took place in 2018 when the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act 2021 had not come into force, the guidelines issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 2005 would regulate the agreement.

As per a rule of the guidelines, the donor and the surrogate mother have to relinquish all parental rights, the court noted, adding that in the present case, the twins would be the daughters of the petitioner and her husband.

As per the plea, the couple could not conceive naturally, and the petitioner's sister volunteered to donate her eggs. In December 2018, the babies were conceived by a surrogate woman and the twin girls were born in August 2019.

In April 2019, the sister and her family met with a road accident, and her husband and daughter were killed. *—PTI*



FLAG HOISTING

Indian Coast Guard men hoist national flag under water as part of 'Har Ghar Tiranga campaign' ahead of the 78th Independence Day, in Lakshadweep
PHOTO: PTI

How far will Ukraine advance in Russia's Kursk?

Ukraine may have taken a "first step" toward a strategy change in its defense against the Russian invasion. That's how Jen Spindel, assistant professor at the University of New Hampshire in the US, described the recent developments in western Russia's Kursk region.

"Ukraine cannot continue to fight this war in the same way it has been for the past two years. It just simply doesn't have the manpower or weapon stores to do so," said Spindel, a foreign policy and security expert.

"Russia is much bigger, and has a larger military, and Ukraine can't continue fighting Russia on equal footing," she said. "It needs to embrace much more of an asymmetric style war, and bring the conflict into Russia, if it wants to have hope of staying in the fight."

Spindel said this means that instead of confronting the Russian army, in many respects superior, on the open battlefield, Ukraine would need to employ tactics more appropriate to the strengths and armaments available to Ukrainian forces — exactly what appears to be happening in Kursk.

According to experts, the offensive at Kursk marks a "turning point" and is "long overdue" ***PHOTO: PTI***

Why is Ukraine sending troops into Kursk?

In the week since the start of the Ukrainian advance, Kyiv has kept mostly quiet about its plans. President Volodymyr Zelensky has so far only spoken of "actions to push the war out into the aggressor's territory," while a high-ranking Ukrainian military officer told the AFP news agency over the weekend that "thousands" of Ukrainian soldiers were involved. The aim was to "overextend" Russian forces and "destabilise" the situation.

On Monday, Ukraine's top military commander, General Oleksandr Syrskyi spoke for the first time about the "offensive operation in the Kursk region." Ukraine, he said at a briefing, now controls around 1,000 square kilometers (roughly 400 square miles) of Russian territory.

Speaking at a meeting with top Russian defense officials on Monday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said the Ukrainian offensive was an attempt by Kyiv to gain the upper hand in possible future talks to end the war. But, he added, the Ukrainian plan would not succeed, with Russia's primary goal being to "squeeze out, drive the enemy out of our territories."

How far have Ukrainian troops moved into Russia?

According to Russian sources, Ukrainian troops advanced into the Kursk region on August 6, quickly moving some 10 kilometers past the border. A week later, media reports suggest the Ukrainians have advanced some 30 kilometers into Russian territory, and have occupied several small villages. The front line remains in flux.

This offensive is the first major advance by official Ukrainian troops into Russian territory since the start of Russia's invasion in February 2022. Last year, informal operations by Russian opposition units fighting for Ukraine took place in Russia's Belgorod region, further south.

'Good for morale, but insignificant in the war'

The Ukrainian advance was "the result of careful planning" on the part of Kyiv, and a "total failure of Russian reconnaissance work," according to Austrian military historian Colonel Markus Reisner.

He credited Kyiv with a "clear propaganda victory," because everyone now is focused on Kursk and not on Ukraine's Donbas region further south, where the Russians are slowly advancing toward cities like Chasiv Yar and Pokrovsk. If Ukraine is able to maintain its control in the Kursk region, he said, it would force Russia to regroup — reducing pressure in Donbas.

Gustav Gressel, a Berlin-based military affairs expert at the European Council on Foreign Relations, took a more skeptical view of the situation in the first days of Ukraine's offensive, calling it "good for morale, but insignificant in the war."

"Russia is the main beneficiary of an extension of the front line into Russian territory, as it further overstretches Ukraine's armed forces," said Gressel.

However, experts believe Ukraine could also be pursuing other goals with its advance toward Kursk. For example — as Putin suspects — to improve its negotiating position with Russia, or to boost the morale of Ukrainian troops "who have 'only' been defending their positions in a grueling war of attrition for that last year-and-a-half," said German journalist and Ukraine expert Winfried Schneider-Deters.

For the Ukrainians, he said, this offensive — especially on enemy territory — is likely to be of considerable importance

"It is possible the Ukrainian leadership wants to demonstrate to Russia, but above all to the West, that Ukraine is not at the end of its tether," said Schneider-Deters. "[Kyiv wants to show] that it's still able to win the war — with further shipments of Western weapons."

US reacts cautiously to Kursk offensive

The offensive marks a "turning point" and is "long overdue," said Schneider-Deters. Until now, the West, led by the US, has prevented Ukraine from moving onto Russian territory out of concern that the war would spread further, he added, saying it was "right" for Ukraine to now ignore these restraints.

Ukrainian troops first got the go-ahead in May, following the renewed Russian offensive on Kharkiv — though the authorization remains limited to the immediate border area. Long-range ballistic missiles, like the ATACMS supplied by Washington, may still only be fired over occupied Ukrainian territory.

How much further will Ukraine advance?

Spindel believes that in order to achieve its goals, Ukraine doesn't need to advance "particularly far" into Russian territory.

"I don't think anyone wants to see this escalate to a conflict where Ukraine is sending troops toward Moscow, or flying drones or planes in that direction," she said, adding that the further the Ukrainian army advances, the greater the risk that troops will be cut off from supply routes. Spindel said the latest advances, into the areas that serve as Russia's deployment zones and where it keeps its weapons, were "significant enough to be a clear operation within Russia, but not far enough to risk a much broader escalation of the war."

Ukraine, she said, needed to maintain a balance and show consideration for its Western partners. However, she believes this incursion onto Russian territory likely won't be the last.

—Courtesy, DW News

SALAR ساڈا

Ocean could lie beneath Mars' surface, reveals study

New research suggests there may be enough water hiding in the cracks of underground rocks beneath the surface of Mars to form an ocean.

The findings are based on seismic measurements from NASA's Mars InSight lander, which detected more than 1,300 marsquakes before it shut down two years ago.

The researchers combined computer models with InSight data, including the quakes' velocity, to determine underground water was the most likely explanation for the seismic readings. The results were published on Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

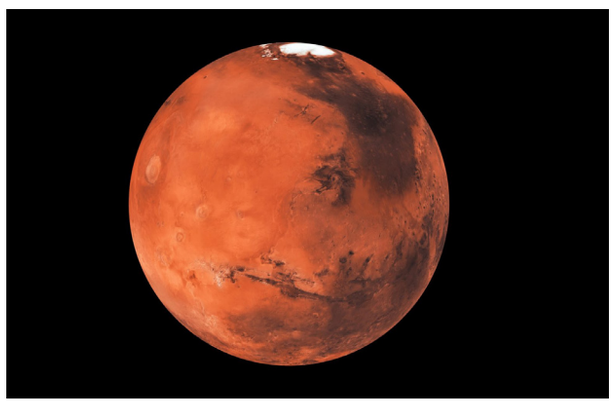
The water – in fractures 11.5km (7.15 miles) to 20km beneath the surface – was most likely to have collected there billions of years ago when Mars harboured rivers, lakes and possibly oceans, according to the lead scientist, Vashan Wright of the University of California San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

"On Earth, what we know is where it is wet enough and there are enough sources of energy, there is microbial life very deep in Earth's subsurface," Wright said.

"The ingredients for life as we know it exist in the Martian subsurface, if these interpretations are correct."

Matthias Morzfeld of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and Michael Manga of the University of California, Berkeley also authored the paper.

InSight Lander – the Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport – was the US space agency's first craft dedicated to looking beneath Mars's surface and study its interior.



The findings are based on seismic measurements from NASA's Mars InSight lander ***PHOTO: NASA***

- If InSight's location at Elysium Planitia near Mars' equator is representative of the rest of the red planet, the underground water would be enough to fill a global ocean 1-2km deep, Vashan Wright said

"On Earth, what we know is where it is wet enough and there are enough sources of energy, there is microbial life very deep in Earth's subsurface. The ingredients for life as we know it exist in the Martian subsurface, if these interpretations are correct

-Vashan Wright, Lead Scientist, University of California

If InSight's location at Elysium Planitia near Mars's equator is representative of the rest of the red planet, the underground water would be enough to fill a global ocean 1-2km deep, Wright added.

It would take drills and other equipment to confirm the presence of water and seek out any potential signs of microbial life.

Scientists have been analysing the data collected by the lander in search of more information about Mars's interior.

Wet almost all over more than 3 billion years ago, Mars is thought to have lost its surface water as its atmosphere thinned, turning the planet into the dry, dusty world known today.

Scientists theorise that much of this ancient water escaped out into space or remained buried below.

Scientists say equipment for drilling and other tasks is needed to positively confirm the existence of water on Mars. *—Al Jazeera*

Scientists say it would take drills and equipment to confirm the presence of water and seek out any potential signs of microbial life in Mars ***PHOTO: AP***

LETTERS Write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Ignored warnings trigger environmental catastrophes

WAYANAD LANDSLIDES

Experts have blamed quarrying and mining in ecologically-sensitive regions for the deadly landslides in India ***PHOTO: AP***

Prasanna Kumar, a survivor of the deadly landslides that struck Kerala's Wayanad district on July 30, saw his sister and her family being swept away by the swirling and powerful muddy waters. Several others who were sleeping were caught unaware and were also washed away.

"I have seen many landslides in this region but this was devastating. The ground shook and the earth under my feet gave way in the blink of an eye. There was a trail of death and destruction after," Kumar told DW from a relief camp.

Fragile ecosystems

Rescue operations are winding down in the search for some 200 people who are still missing, including Kumar's relatives. The natural disaster took the lives of over 300 people and caused damage to property and infrastructure. It has also prompted soul-searching over whether India should be taking more steps to avoid environmental catastrophes in the future.

Sunita Narain, director at the Center for Science and Environment in New Delhi, highlighted natural disasters in the Himalayan region as examples of the environment being unable to withstand damaging activities such as deforestation and ill-considered construction.

Last year, Joshimath town in the state of Uttarakhand was reported to be "sinking," with cracks in the town's buildings and streets. In October, a dam containing a glacial lake in Sikkim burst. The following month, a cave-in left over 40 Indian workers trapped in the Silkyara tunnel of the Himalayas for 17 days.

Officials ignored recommendations from ecologists

In Kerala, the Western Ghats region where the landslides occurred is also an ecologically sensitive region where suggestions from environmentalists have been ignored. Quarrying and deforestation is carried out in unsuitable or dangerous locations.

An expert panel led by environmental scientist Madhav Gadgil recommended in 2010 that 75% of the 129,037 square-kilometer (49,821 square-mile) area of the Western Ghats be declared environmentally sensitive, citing its dense forests and the presence of many endemic species. But this was reduced to 50 per cent just three years later based on recommendations by a second panel.

There are 5,924 quarries in Kerala, including in the most ecologically fragile zones, according to online outlet Mathrubhumi, citing a report by Gadgil. While not all quarrying is government-sanctioned, there is a lack of enforcement to crack down on quarrying without permits.

Gadgil attributed the landslide tragedy to the Kerala government's failure to implement crucial ecological recommendations, telling Indian media: "There is a direct link between hard-rock quarrying and slope failures in the form of landslides, especially in a place like Wayanad."

Should India update its weather warning system?

Nearly half of Kerala comprises hills and mountainous regions with slopes exceeding 20 degrees. A recent risk assessment, based on nearly 81,000 landslides covering 17 states in the country between 1998 and 2022, showed that Kerala witnessed 6,039 landslides and was the worst hit among non-Himalayan states, according to the Landslide Atlas of India.

Human-induced climate change is already intensifying weather extremes in India, including heat waves and flooding. Such events are likely to exacerbate disasters in already sensitive areas, such as on the steep slopes of Kerala. Ahead of the disaster, an unusually large 572 millimeters (22.5 inches) of rainfall was reportedly recorded in Wayanad in just 48 hours, triggering the massive landslides.

Akshay Deoras, a meteorologist from the National Centre for Atmospheric Science and the Department of Meteorology at the UK's University of Reading, called for India to adapt its current warning system to reflect the dramatic changes in climate the country is experiencing.

"The efficacy of the current color-coded warning system and the language used in alerts or forecasts must be re-examined by consulting all stakeholders in the country, including the media, citizens, disaster relief forces and state governments. Traditional ways of managing disasters are not going to work for such events," said Deoras.

He suggested that early warning systems in India be made more robust by exploiting the use of Doppler radars, satellites, real-time observations and direct communications with people.

"The focus needs to be on improving weather prediction models as well," Deoras told DW.

"Meteorologists must be empowered to alert people directly, reducing the dependency on state governments or local authorities for the dissemination of alerts. The tornado warnings and prediction systems in the US provides some clues," he said.

—Courtesy, DW News

PHOTO: PTI

8 killed in Venezuela gas explosion

CARACAS, 13 AUG

At least eight people were killed and 22 others injured on Monday in a gas explosion in a town east of Venezuela's capital Caracas, a government official said. "Unfortunately, eight people are dead, including two babies. We extend our deepest condolences and solidarity to their families," Hector Rodriguez, governor of Miranda state, said in a post on social media. Those injured in the blast in the town of Petare were taken to hospitals for treatment, said Rodriguez. Earlier, the governor said the accident was caused by a "gas leak and subsequent explosion of the cylinder." *—Courtesy, Xinhua*

Teenager detained in stabbing attack at Turkey cafe

ANKARA, 13 AUG

A teenager wearing a helmet and bulletproof vest randomly stabbed five people at an open-air cafe in northwest Turkiye before being detained by police, officials and media reports said Tuesday. The 18-year-old, identified as Arda K., broadcast Monday's knife attack on social media through a camera attached to his vest, HaberTurk television reported. The victims were people relaxing after prayers at a mosque in Eskisehir, some 230km west of Ankara. The teenager was detained following a police chase, according to the Eskisehir governor's office. The five wounded individuals were hospitalised and two of them were in serious condition, according to the state-run Anadolu Agency. The assailant was also carrying an ax but did not appear to have used it. Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said an investigation had begun. ***—AP***

Two Pak Muslim women booked for blasphemy

LAHORE, 13 AUG

Two Muslim women have been booked under blasphemy charges for allegedly burning pages of the Quran in Pakistan's Punjab province, police said on Tuesday. The principal of a private school Shahnaz Khan and her chef Shazia Karamat have been booked under section 295-B of the Pakistan Penal Code on the complaint of a local Imam (prayer leader) Kashif Ali at Rai Kalan village of Kasur district, some 50 km from here. Both the women in question and their families have fled the village following an announcement by Kashif Ali from his mosque that they (women) had burnt the pages of the Quran on Saturday, police officer Khalid Saleem said. ***—AP***

Taylor case: Suspect's lawyer alleges exaggeration

VIENNA, 13 AUG

A lawyer for the main suspect in an alleged plot to attack now-cancelled Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna said Tuesday that authorities' presentation of the case is exaggerated, and his client wouldn't have been able to carry out plans that the attorney described as "fantasies." The 19-year-old Austrian man, whose name hasn't been released because of Austrian privacy rules, was arrested last Wednesday — one of three people who were detained. Hours later, organizers canceled the concerts that Swift was scheduled to play Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Austrian capital's Ernst Happel Stadium. Fans were devastated by the decision. Austrian officials have said that the suspect wanted to carry out an attack outside the stadium, killing as many people as possible using knives or home-made explosives. ***—AP***

Murder case against ousted PM Hasina

Hasina, 6 others were booked for the death of a grocery shop owner in violent clashes

DHAKA, 13 AUG

A murder case has been filed against Bangladesh's ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and six others over the death of a grocery shop owner during last month's violent clashes that led to the fall of her government, media reports said on Tuesday.

The case was the first to be filed against Hasina, 76, after she resigned and fled to India last week following widespread protests against her Awami League-led government over a controversial job quota system.

The case was filed by a well-wisher of the grocery store owner Abu Sayed, who was killed on 19 July in police firing during a procession in support of the quota reform movement in Mohammadpur, the Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported.

The other accused are Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and former Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun, among others.

Several unnamed high-ranking police officials and government officials were also accused in the case, according to the report. Seven political parties, including Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), met Yunus separately and said the interim government could take the time necessary to create a conducive environment for holding free and fair elections. The White House strongly refuted allegations that the United States interfered in the internal affairs of Bangladesh *—PTI*

Sheikh Hasina PHOTO: ANI

- The case was filed by a well-wisher of the grocery store owner Abu Sayed, who was killed on 19 July in police firing during a procession in support of the quota reform movement

Bangladesh's inflation spikes to 11.66% in July

DHAKA, 13 AUG

Bangladesh's inflation in July reached a 12-year high at 11.66 per cent as it faced turmoil due to the massive student protest over a controversial job quota system, according to the country's bureau of statistics.

The inflation was 9.72 per cent in June.

Data released by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics showed that food inflation in July registered a record high of 14.10 per cent and non-food inflation at 9.68 per cent. *—PTI*

> **United States will continue to monitor the situation in Bangladesh. President Joe Biden is consistent in speaking loud and clear on human rights issues.** -White House

Bangladesh interim head Muhammad Yunus and associates visit Dhakeshwari temple in Dhaka on Tuesday PHOTO: X/ @ADITYARAJKAUL

Yunus meets B'deshi Hindus amid chaos

DHAKA, 13 AUG

Reaching out to the distressed Hindu community members at the famous Dhakeshwari Temple here, Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus on Tuesday urged the people to "exercise patience" before judging his government's role.

Yunus, who took charge as the Chief Advisor of the interim government on 8 August amid ongoing violence and vandalism, including against the minorities, also said each one's rights should be ensured and blamed "institutional decay" for the predicament that his country has fallen into. The meeting comes close on the heels of attacks on the minority Hindu population, vandalisation of their business and properties and devastation of Hindu temples hours in the violence. The interim government has set up a hotline asking people to provide information about attacks on Hindu temples, churches or any other religious institutions, amid reports of vandalisation of religious places, businesses and properties of minorities.

He said that the high-profile resignations of authorities close to Hasina are legal after student leaders who organised protests against Hasina's government issued ultimatums for them to quit. *—PTI*

MARRED BY TECH GLITCH

Musk hosts chat with Trump on X

WASHINGTON DC, 13 AUG

United States Republican presidential nominee and former president Donald Trump has returned to X as he attempts to recover from a rocky couple of weeks on the campaign trail.

On Monday, he marked the occasion by sitting down for a chat on Spaces with platform owner Elon Musk, who has publicly endorsed Trump's campaign for re-election.The discussion eventually got under way about 40 minutes late after what Musk claimed was a "massive" cyberattack on X.

They talked about Trump's Democratic rival Kamala Harris, the European Union, China, climate change, censorship and migration. After Trump claimed Harris was a "radical left lunatic" and "worse than Bernie Sanders", Musk responded: "It's essential that you win the election for the sake of the country." About 1.2 million people were listening in.

— Courtesy, Al Jazeera

Elon Musk with Republican candidate Donald Trump PHOTO: X

> **Although Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed, now they're full cities again. Yeah so it's not as scary as people think**
>
> —Elon Musk, CEO of X

> **Kamala Harris and Joe Biden are incompetent. I think that she's more incompetent than he is, and that's saying something because he's not too good.**
>
> —Donald Trump, Republican candidate

> **Trump's entire campaign is in service of people like Elon Musk and himself — self-obsessed rich guys who will sell out the middle class and who cannot run a livestream in the year 2024**
>
> —Kamala Harris, Democratic candidate

What is DDoS attack?

Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack disrupts network services by overwhelming websites and servers with excessive traffic, aiming to deplete an application's resources. This surge in traffic can lead to degraded website performance or completely knock the site offline.

A DDoS attack can however last for hours or even days, in a way causing multiple interruptions during the course of a single assault.

—Agencies

Israeli captive killed, two injured, says Hamas

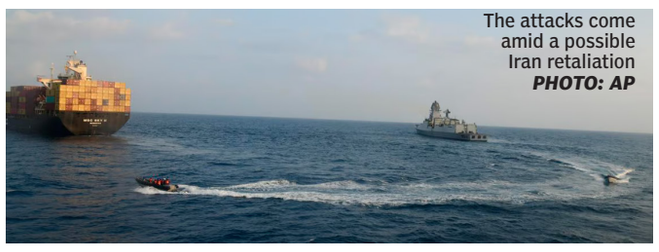
DEIR AL-BALAH, 13 AUG

Hamas's armed wing has said one Israeli captive was killed in Gaza and two female captives were wounded in a separate incident, days ahead of a new round of ceasefire talks proposed by the United States, Egypt and Qatar.

Attempts to save the lives of the two seriously injured were under way, he said, adding that a committee had been formed to investigate and that more details would be announced. Israeli army spokesman Daniel Hagari said they were looking into the matter. "At this point, we do not have any intelligence ... that allows us to refute or confirm the claims of Hamas," Hagari said on X. Israel protesters have gathered weekly to demand a ceasefire deal that would bring the captives home. *Courtesy, —Al Jazeera*

Israel protesters have gathered weekly to demand a ceasefire deal that would bring the captives home PHOTO: PTI

Suspected attacks by Houthis target shipping in Red Sea



The attacks come amid a possible Iran retaliation PHOTO: AP

DUBAI, 13 AUG

Suspected attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels targeted shipping in the Red Sea on Tuesday, officials said, the latest in their campaign of assaults over the Israel-Hamas war.

The attacks comes as Yemen's main sponsor, Iran, weighs a possible retaliatory attack against Israel over the assassination of Hamas official Ismail Haniyeh in late July, which has renewed fears of a wider regional war breaking out across the Mideast.

Already, the Houthi assaults have have disrupted the USD 1 trillion of goods that flow annually through the maritime route crucial to trade between Asia, Europe and the Middle East, while also sparking the most intense combat the US Navy has seen since World War II. *—AP*

Starmer warns Iran against attack on Israel

LONDON, 13 AUG

Prime Minister of UK Keir Starmer has joined US President Joe Biden and allied world leaders in a call for "Iran to stand down" amid ongoing tension in the Middle East. He also spoke to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday night, warning him of a "serious risk of miscalculation", Downing Street said. *Courtesy, The Independentt*

PAKISTAN TURMOIL

3 civilians killed in Pak border clash, says Taliban

ISLAMABAD, 13 AUG

Pakistani and Afghan Taliban forces traded cross-border fire near a key northwestern crossing, killing a woman and two children on the Afghan side of the border, officials said Tuesday.

There was no immediate word on casualties on the Pakistani side of the Torkham border which was shut, disrupting trade and movement of people between the two countries, local Pakistani official Zahid Khan said.

Torkham, is located in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. It was unclear who initiated the attack. Each side has in the past closed Torkham, and also the southwestern Chaman border crossing in Pakistan, for various reasons. Both crossings are vital for trade and travel for Afghanistan and Pakistan. *—PTI*

PHOTO: AP

Pak ruling coalition hails Hameed's arrest

ISLAMABAD, 13 AUG

Pakistan's ruling coalition has hailed the arrest of former ISI chief Lt Gen (retd.) Faiz Hameed in connection with a housing scheme scandal but jailed former premier Imran Khan's party decided to stay neutral and termed it the army's "internal matter".

Hameed served as the director general of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) from 2019 to 2021, when Khan was prime minister and was accused of meddling in political affairs at his behest.

—PTI

CLASSES CANCELLED

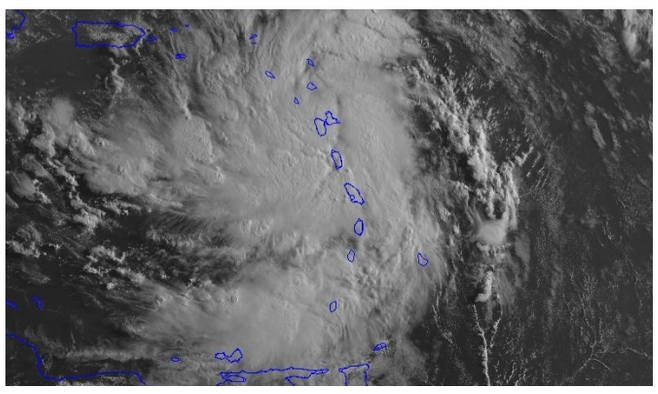
Storm Ernesto alerts issued for Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, 13 AUG

Puerto Rico activated the National Guard and cancelled the start of classes in public schools as forecasters warned that the US territory would be hit by Tropical Storm Ernesto, which formed in the Atlantic Ocean on Monday.

Tropical storm warnings were in effect for Puerto Rico, the US and British Virgin Islands, Antigua, Barbuda, Anguilla, St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, Guadeloupe, St. Martin, St. Barts and St. Maarten.

The storm was located about 475km off Antigua. It had maximum sustained winds of 65 kph and was moving west-northwest at 44kph. Ernesto is the fifth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season.



Forecasters warned the storm is expected to unleash floods and landslides PHOTO: X@TWAPUERTORICO

Officials in the French Caribbean said the storm was expected to drench Guadeloupe on Monday and pass near St. Barts and St. Martin. The National Hurricane Center said Ernesto is forecast to approach Puerto Rico and the US and British Virgin Islands on Tuesday evening.

Forecasters warned the storm is expected to unleash floods and landslides.

"We cannot let our guard down," Nino Correa, Puerto Rico's emergency management commissioner, said at a news conference.

Ernesto Morales, with the National Weather Service in San Juan, said between six to eight inches of rain are expected, with higher amounts in isolated areas. He also warned of hurricane-strength wind gusts as the storm is expected to hit northeast Puerto Rico and move across the US territory late Tuesday and early Wednesday.

He urged people to prepare and stay alert given ongoing uncertainties over the approaching system.

—AP

Philippines protests Chinese jets' obstructing patrol path

MANILA, 13 AUG

PHOTO: AP

The Philippine government said Tuesday it has filed a diplomatic protest against Beijing after Chinese jets flew dangerously close and fired a volley of flares in the path of a Philippine air force patrol plane over a disputed shoal in the South China Sea.

The Chinese air force jets' hostile actions against the Philippine military's NC-212i light transport plane Thursday over the Scarborough Shoal was the first such aerial encounter since high-seas hostilities between Beijing and Manila in the busy seaway started to flare last year.

Philippine military chief Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr. did not report any injuries or damage but condemned the Chinese actions, which he said could have had tragic consequences.

"If the flares came into contact with our aircraft, these could have been blown into the propeller or the intake or burned our plane," Brawner told reporters. "It was very dangerous."

Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Teresita Daza said without elaborating that a diplomatic protest has been transmitted to China.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said over the weekend that the actions by the Chinese air force jets were "unjustified, illegal and reckless." *—AP*

Rupee settles flat at 83.97 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 13 AUG

The rupee witnessed range-bound trading and settled for the day on a flat note at 83.97 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, as weak domestic markets and a surge in crude oil prices weighed on investor sentiments. Forex traders said risk aversion in the global markets amid heightened geo-political tension in the Middle East between Israel and Iran also dented sentiments. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit traded in a tight range as it opened at 83.95 and finally settled at 83.97 (provisional) against the American currency, unchanged from its previous close. On Monday, the rupee settled for the day lower by 2 paise at 83.97 against the American currency. The local unit had slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 against the US dollar on 5 August. —*PTI*

Gold jumps ₹500 to ₹72,850/10g; silver remains flat

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Gold prices jumped Rs 500 to Rs 72,850 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid strong cues from the global market and a rise in domestic demand. In the previous session, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at Rs 72,350 per 10 grams on Monday. However, silver prices remained flat at Rs 83,500 per kilogram on Tuesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also rallied by Rs 500 to Rs 72,500 per 10 grams against the previous close. Traders attributed the rise in gold prices to the rising demand from retail buyers as well as jewellers. Gold is trading at USD 2,502.70 per ounce, up by USD 1.30 per ounce. "Gold's gains on Tuesday as demand for safe-haven assets continued to support the precious metal's rise. —*PTI*

Hindalco Q1 profit rises 25% to ₹3,074 cr

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Aditya Birla Group's metal flagship Hindalco Industries on Tuesday reported a 25.2 per cent rise in consolidated profit at Rs 3,074 crore for the June quarter on the back of favourable macros, operational efficiencies and lower input costs. The company had posted consolidated profit of Rs 2,454 crore in the year-ago period, Hindalco Industries said in a regulatory filing. In a statement, the company said the consolidated PAT in the first quarter of FY'25 "was Rs 3,074 crore compared to Rs 2,454 crore in Q1 FY24, up by 25 per cent year-on-year (YoY)." Total income during the quarter under review rose to Rs 57,437 crore, over Rs 53,382 crore in the year-ago period. The consolidated revenue for the first quarter stood at Rs 57,013 crore, up eight per cent YoY on account of better realisations and efficiencies in India operations. "Hindalco reported an EBITDA of Rs 7,992 crore (vs Rs 6,109 crore) in Q1 FY25, up 31 per cent YoY, driven by lower input costs and higher volumes," the statement said. —*PTI*

EaseMyTrip profit rises 31% to ₹33.93 cr in Q2

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Travel booking platform EaseMyTrip Planners on Tuesday reported a 31 per cent rise in its consolidated profit after tax to Rs 33.93 crore in June 2024 quarter. It had reported a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 25.90 crore in the same quarter of last fiscal. The company's total income increased to Rs 156.22 crore in the April-June period, from Rs 126.64 crore a year ago, a regulatory filing showed. However, its total expenses also rose to Rs 109.03 crore during the quarter under review, as against Rs 91.56 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal. "EaseMyTrip sustained its bottom-line growth during the relevant period, continuing with steady operational momentum," Nishant Pitti, Co-founder and CEO of EaseMyTrip, stated. —*PTI*

India's weight on MSCI equity index rises to record high

Vodafone Idea, Oil India and 5 others to be included in index

BENGALURU, 13 AUG

India's weight on the MSCI Global Standard index, which tracks emerging market stocks, has risen to another record high, which is likely to attract inflows of about $3 billion into its equity markets.

India has further narrowed the gap with China on the key MSCI index. While China's weightage on the index will fall to 24.2 per cent from 24.8 per cent, India's weight will rise to 19.8 per cent from 19.2 per cent, according to Abhilash Pagaria, head of Nuvama Alternative and Quantitative Research.

The changes in the index weights will come into effect on after markets close on Aug. 30. India's weight could likely rise above 20 per cent at end November.

This will lead to about $2.7 billion-$3 billion inflows into India, according to Nuvama.

HDFC Bank (HDBK.NS), opens new tab, India's top private lender and the heaviest stock in the benchmark NSE Nifty 50 (.NSEI), opens new tab, will see an increase in its weightage, triggering potential inflows of $1.8 billion, Nuvama said.

India's weight will rise to 19.8 per cent from 19.2 per cent PHOTO: PTI

- India's weight on the MSCI Global Standard index, which tracks emerging market stocks, has risen to another record high, which is likely to attract inflows of about $3 billion into its equity markets

"Given the current pace and momentum in domestic equities, India could potentially cross 22 per cent weightage by year-end" on the MSCI index, Pagaria said.

MSCI is a leading provider of critical decision support tools and services for the global investment community.

In the MSCI Global Smallcap Indices list, 27 firms will be included in the MSCI India Index. The additions include Bajaj Hindusthan Sugar, Bandhan Bank, Gulf Oil Lubricants India, Inox Wind Energy and TVS Supply Chain Solutions.

Bharti Airtel (BRTI.NS), opens new tab, Coal India (COAL.NS), opens new tab, Mphasis (MBFL.NS), opens new tab are among the companies that will also see an increase in their weightage on the index, while Maruti Suzuki India (MRTI.NS), opens new tab, LTIMindtree (LTIM.NS), opens new tab, Ambuja Cements (ABUJ.NS), opens new tab, Adani Enterprises (ADEL.NS), opens new tab, Yes Bank (YESB.NS), opens new tab and SRF (SRFL.NS), opens new tab will see a reduction.

Dixon Technologies (DIXO.NS), opens new tab, Vodafone Idea (VODA.NS), opens new tab, Oil India (OILI.NS), opens new tab, Zydus Lifesciences (ZYDU.NS), opens new tab, Rail Vikas Nigam (RAIV.NS), opens new tab, Prestige Estates Project (PREG.NS), opens new tab and Oracle Financial Services (ORCL.NS), opens new tab will be added to MSCI Emerging Markets index while Bandhan Bank (BANH.NS), opens new tab will be excluded.

About 25 stocks will be added to the MSCI India Small-cap index. They will see likely inflows of $3 million-$26 million, according to Nuvama.

—*PTI /Reuters*

BEAR MARKET

Sensex sheds 693 pts, Nifty below 24,150; HDFC and SBI drag

MUMBAI, 13 AUG

Equity benchmark BSE Sensex tumbled nearly 700 points to sink below the 79,000 level on Tuesday, extending its losses for the second straight day due to selling pressure in HDFC Bank, SBI and ITC amid fresh foreign capital outflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 692.89 points or 0.87 per cent to settle at 78,956.03. During the day, it tanked 759.54 points or 0.95 per cent to 78,889.38. The NSE Nifty slumped 208 points or 0.85 per cent to 24,139. From the 30 Sensex firms, HDFC Bank declined over 3 per cent. Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance, State Bank of India, Tata Motors, Power Grid and JSW Steel were the other laggards.

In contrast, Titan, HCL Tech, Nestle, Sun Pharma, Reliance and Mahindra & Mahindra were the gainers.

"The MSCI rebalancing is unfolding as anticipated, leading to mixed reactions among stocks -- some are seeing gains, while others are experiencing profit-booking. A key focus is HDFC Bank, which will see an increased weight, though with a lower adjustment factor.

PHOTO: PTI

Consequently, the inflows will occur in two tranches, amounting to over USD 1.8 billion.

"HDFC Bank is currently under pressure after outperforming the market in the days leading up to the MSCI rebalancing, driven by expectations despite its weak earnings. The stock is now facing profit-booking as investors react to the phased inflows," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd.

Shares of seven of the ten Adani group firms ended marginally lower on Tuesday, while three companies -- Adani Total Gas, Adani Green and Adani Energy -- ended in the positive territory amid weak trends in the equity market.

Adani Wilmar went lower by 2.37 per cent, Adani Enterprises declined 1.92 per cent. —*PTI*

Q2: India's smartphone market sees steady growth

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

The Indian smartphone market grew 3.2 per cent with 39 million units shipment in the second quarter of 2024, market research firm International Data Corporation said on Tuesday.

The market was led by Chinese smartphone maker Vivo with a 16.5 per cent share in volume terms with its shipment growing by 6.7 per cent on a year-over-year (YoY) basis, it said.

Apple led the super-premium segment, which are smartphones priced above Rs 67,000 apiece with an 83 per cent share followed by Samsung with a 16 per cent share.

"Overall, Vivo continued to lead for the second consecutive quarter, with multiple launches across price segments through the Y series, mid-premium V series and flagship X Fold 3 Pro. Motorola registered the highest growth backed by product portfolio across price segments," the report said.

Xiaomi followed Vivo with 13.5 per cent market.

Samsung slipped to the third sport with a 12.9 per cent share as its shipment declined 15.4 per cent on a YoY basis, according to the report. Apple stood at the sixth spot with a 6.7 per cent market share.

According to IDC Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker, the Indian smartphone market shipped 69 million smartphones in the first half of 2024.

The biggest growth segment in the overall smartphone market was the entry-premium segment which counts devices priced in the range of Rs 16,000 to Rs 33,500. —*PTI*

IISER CONVOCATION

Govt needs money to meet challenges, says Sitharaman

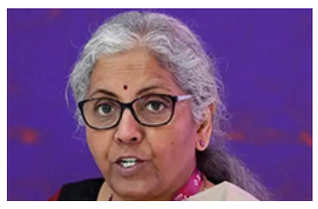
BHOPAL, 13 AUG

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday justified the present taxation regime, saying that the country needs resources to meet the challenges facing the nation and also to fund research and development activities.

Sitharaman was addressing the 11th convocation of Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) in Bhopal.

While appealing to the scientist community to do more research on the storage of renewable energy, Sitharaman said the world has promised a lot of money towards transitioning from fossil fuel to renewable energy but that money is yet to come.

"But India didn't wait. The promises given in Paris (Paris Agreement) were fulfilled with our own money. There are times when being the finance minister, it doesn't give me motivation when I have to answer people about why our taxes are like this? Why can't we even be lower than this? I wish I can bring it down to almost nil. But India's challenges are severe and challenges will have to be overcome," the finance minister said.



Nirmala Sitharaman PHOTO: PTI

She said the government has heavily invested in scientific research. "I seek a very learned crowd before me graduates, PhD holders, to understand India's challenges. I have taken the example of renewable energy, global energy as one of those sustainable sources of energy for a growing country like India," she said.

While urging scientists to come up with innovations, she said that India is moving from fossil fuel to renewable energy at its own strength as the country cannot afford to wait for money from somewhere else.

Sitharaman also urged scientists to develop batteries for the storage of the renewable energy as transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy has to be sustainable. —*PTI*

Shell signs new pact with L&T Services

AMSTERDAM/ BENGALURU, 13 AUG

L&T Technology Services Limited (BSE: 540115, NSE: LTTS), a global leader in engineering, digital and R&D services, announced that it has signed a long-term framework agreement with Shell, one of the world's largest energy companies.

The multi-year framework agreement will see LTTS providing Integrated Engineering and Procurement Services along with Digital Engineering Services , Data Governance for Capital Projects and Digital Project Management Consultancy for Shell's global assets as necessary.

With over two decades of experience in engineering, manufacturing services, digital transformation, and data services, LTTS is positioned well to support Shell on a global scale deploying their unique global delivery model for delivering projects.

—*ANI*

GETRI to promote energy-efficient measures

VADODARA, 13 AUG

Green Energy Transition Research Institute (GETRI) has tied up with not-for-profit organisation AEEE to promote adoption of energy-efficient measures across Gujarat.

An agreement was signed at an event which was organised by the two as well as the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) in Vadodara, according to a release.

The collaboration marks a significant step towards meeting the state's sustainable development goals (SDGs) and broader objectives in decarbonisation and emission intensity reduction, AEEE (Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy) said in the release.

As part of the agreement, AEEE and GETRI will collaborate on programmes to strengthen energy efficiency policies, including financing, measurement, and verification; promote energy-efficient appliances, assist in demand response programmes and encourage the use of Energy Service Company (ESCO) models, it said.

PHOTO: PTI

"We aim to create a lasting impact on Gujarat's energy landscape and develop innovative strategies to benefit both the environment and the economy," Satish Kumar, President and Executive Director of AEEE, said. According to GETRI director Alka Yadav, over the next three years, AEEE and GETRI will work closely to improve the adoption of energy-efficient practices in the state, contributing to Gujarat's and India's broader goals of climate change mitigation. —*PTI*

TRAI asks telcos to blacklist unregistered telemarketers

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Sector regulator TRAI on Tuesday directed telcos to disconnect all telecom resources of unregistered telemarketers found making spam calls, and to blacklist them for up to two years.

Further, TRAI has asked telcos to comply immediately with its latest directive and submit regular updates on action taken in this regard on a fortnightly basis.

Issuing its directive to telcos, TRAI said this "decisive action" is expected to significantly reduce spam calls and provide relief to consumers.

TRAI in a release said it has issued "directives to access providers to disconnect all telecom resources of unregistered senders for making spam calls and to blacklist such senders under the Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulations, 2018" regulations.

Towards this, TRAI has mandated all access service providers to stop voice promotional calls whether pre-recorded or computer generated or otherwise from all unregistered senders or telemarketers (UTMs) using bulk connections or other telecom resources.

"... All promotional voice calls from the unregistered Senders/ Unregistered Telemarketer (UTMs) using Telecom Resources (SIP/ PRI/ other telecom resources) shall be stopped immediately," TRAI said.

If any unregistered telemarketer or sender is found to be misusing telecom resources for making commercial voice calls in violation of the regulations resulting in consumer complaints, all its telecom resources will be disconnected by the primary telecom service provider for a period up to two years.

—*PTI*

Inventurus Solutions seeks Sebi's nod for IPO

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Inventurus Knowledge Solutions Ltd, which provides healthcare support services, has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise funds through an Initial Public Offering (IPO).

The company's IPO is entirely an Offer For Sale (OFS) of up to 2.82 crore equity shares by promoters and individual shareholders, with no fresh issue component, according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP).

Since the issue is completely an OFS, the company will not receive any proceeds from the IPO and the entire fund will go to shareholders. The company, which is backed by Rekha Jhunjhunwala and RARE Enterprises, in its draft papers filed on Monday, said that the objective of the initial share sale is to gain the advantages of listing the equity shares on the stock exchanges.

PHOTO: PTI

Inventurus Knowledge Solutions Ltd, is a technology-enabled healthcare solutions provider and a care enablement platform assisting physician enterprises in the US, Canada and Australia, with a focus on the US markets. —*PTI*

DEBUT TRADE

FirstCry shares list at 40% premium over IPO price

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Shares of e-commerce platform FirstCry's parent Brainbees Solutions Ltd on Tuesday listed with a premium of 40 per cent against the issue price of Rs 465.

The stock made its debut at Rs 625, a jump of 34.40 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. Later, it surged 52 per cent to Rs 707.05.

At the NSE, it listed at Rs 651, reflecting a sharp rally of 40 per cent. The company's market valuation stood at Rs 34,741.21 crore. The initial public offer of Brainbees Solutions received 12.22 times subscription on the closing day of bidding on Thursday.

The Rs 4,194 crore initial share sale had a price band of Rs 440-465 a share.

The stock made its debut at Rs 625, a jump of 34.40 per cent from the issue price on the BSE PHOTO: ANI

The public issue of Pune-based Brainbees Solutions had a fresh issue of equity shares valued at Rs 1,666 crore and an Offer For Sale (OFS) component of up to 5.44 crore shares worth Rs 2,528 crore by existing shareholders.

The company will use net proceeds from the fresh issue for setting up stores under the brand 'BabyHug', investment in subsidiaries, overseas expansion, and sales and marketing initiatives. Besides, a portion will be used for corporate general purposes.

Launched in 2010, FirstCry is India's largest multi-channel, multi-brand retailing platform for mothers', babies' and kids' products. It was set up to create a one-stop destination for parenting needs across commerce, content, community engagement, and education, based on brand affinity, loyalty and trust of customers.

The Rs 4,194 crore initial share sale received bids for 60,64,29,472 shares against 4,96,39,004 shares on offer, as per NSE data.

The portion for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) got subscribed 19.30 times while the quota for non institutional investors received 4.68 times subscription. —*PTI*

Sachin mints 3.35 crore profit

In October 2023, Sachin Tendulkar and his wife Anjali Tendulkar invested Rs 10 crore in the company as they picked up a little more than 2.05 lakh equity shares for Rs 487.44 apiece, higher than the IPO issue price. At the listing price of Rs 651 per share, their stake in the company stood more than Rs 13.35 crore. This means Tendulkar made a profit of more than 3.35 crore on Tuesday.

Ratan Tata's shares shoot up

Ratan Tata, who had invested Rs 66 lakh in the company to buy 77,900 equity shares for Rs 84.72 per share back in 2016 valued 5.07 crore at the listing price, delivered a return of 670 per cent.

Sri Lanka Cricket ropes in Ian Bell as batting coach

COLOMBO, 13 AUG

Sri Lanka on Tuesday appointed Ian Bell as their batting coach ahead of their tour of England comprising three Tests. Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) announced on its website that Bell, who scored 7727 runs in 118 Tests, will start working with the national side later this week. "He will start working with the team from August 16 and remain until the conclusion of the three-Test match series," SLC said. SLC CEO Ashley de Silva expressed: "We appointed Ian to bring in a person with local knowledge to help the players with key insights on the conditions there." "Ian has a lot of experience playing in England, and we believe his inputs will help our team in this crucial tour. Sri Lanka's tour of England begins with the first Test at Manchester from August 21-25. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X@GOAL

Brentford signs forward Carvalho from Liverpool

LONDON, 13 AUG

Premier League club Brentford has completed the signing of forward Fabio Carvalho from Liverpool on a five-year contract. British media reported that the deal was worth up to 27.5 million pounds ($35 million). "Fabio is a player with a lot of qualities. He can play in all of the front three or four positions in a 4-3-3 or a 4-2-3-1. His best position is probably as a No. 10 or coming in from the left," Brentford head coach Thomas Frank told the club's website. "Offensively, he has great abilities on the ball: he can go past players, slide a pass, create chances and get on the end of chances. He's a type of player that we don't have many of in the squad so he will add that something extra for us." *—AP*

Pegula beats Anisimova to claim 2nd straight title

TORONTO, 13 AUG

Jessica Pegula, the No. 3 seed and the sixth-ranked WTA Tour player, defended her National Bank Open women's singles title by defeating Amanda Anisimova 6-3, 2-6, 6-1 in all-American final. Pegula, from nearby Buffalo, New York, won last year's National Bank Open in Montreal and improved her all-time record at the Canadian tennis championship to 17-2 in picking up the sixth tournament victory of her career. "So excited to be here with the trophy again," she said. "I really wanted this one. I know everyone's talking about my record and all this stuff, but it's nice to be able to get through to back it up." *—AP*

Louis Rapid Chess: Praggs brings up rear on Day

SAINT LOUIS, 13 AUG

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa missed out twice on cashing in on winning positions, ending up at the bottom of the table after the first day of Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz tournament. Starting off as black against Aroninan, the Indian started on a positive note with a draw but subsequently bungled in the endgame against Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France. While there was no denying his superiority in his games against the American or the French, he was again subjected to another task wherein the Indian youngster failed to deliver the goods. With six more rounds to come in the rapid section, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave is in the front one five points out of a possible six, whiel Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia and the Amerian duo of Lenier Dominguez and Levon Aronian. Pragga is last and a comeback looks pretty much on cards for the Indian with six rounds still remaining in rapid alomng with 18 rounds of blitz games before the winner is determined. *—PTI*

India aims at 25 medals at Paralympics

India had won 19 medals at the Tokyo Paralympics and 111 medals at Para Asian Games

Indian Paralympic Committee President Devendra Jhajharia during a press conference ahead of the Paris Paralympics 2024, in Jaipur on Tuesday *PHOTO: ANI*

JAIPUR, 13 AUG

India is hoping to win more than 25 medals from its largest-ever contingent of 84 athletes at the upcoming Paris Paralympic Games beginning on 28 August, the country's governing body chief Devendra Jhajharia said on Tuesday.

Jhajharia, himself a double gold medallist at the Paralympics, said the Indian contingent would look the carry the momentum of record-breaking performances in the 2021 Tokyo Paralympics and 2023 Hangzhou Asian Para Games.

India had won 19 medals at the Tokyo Paralympics and a historic 111 medal at the Para Asian Games. "This is the biggest para contingent India has ever sent to the Paralympics. We are very confident about the overall performance and are sure to win more than 25 medals," Jhajharia said here at a event organised by the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI).

India is set to compete in 12 sports, including archery, athletics, badminton, canoeing, cycling, blind judo, powerlifting, rowing, shooting, swimming, table tennis, and taekwondo. "Most of our athletes are in excellent shape, having trained rigorously for this event. We expect outstanding results, particularly in athletics, badminton, archery, and shooting. They are ready to make India proud," the PCI President said. *—PTI*

INDIA CAN ORGANISE OLYMPICS 2036, SAYS MACRON

PARIS, 13 AUG

As India looks forward to bidding for the Olympics 2036, French President Emmanuel Macron said that India has the "capacity" to organise such events. Speaking to Jio Cinema, Macron said he believes in India's future. He added that the Olympics is fierce competition. "First of all, I am a strong believer in your country and the future of your country. And what you can build and your capacity to organise such events. I think this is a fierce competition. You should not underestimate that fact. I remember that seven years ago when we went to Lausanne, we did compete with the US at that time - Los Angeles. And we found this agreement at the end, it was, it is still a great cooperation. So, competing, by itself, is clearly a great preparation," Macron said. Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed that India will make efforts to host these big sporting events. Speaking to the para-athletes contingent in Delhi following a successful Para Asian Games in Hangzhou, PM Modi said the approach of the government is "athlete-centric". He said India is growing in terms of its sporting culture and also as a "sporting society". *—ANI*

'Vinesh is a champ no matter what CAS verdict is'

NEW DELHI, 13 AUGUST

Vidushpat Singhania, the advocate of wrestler Vinesh Phogat, said that the ace Indian wrestler is a champion irrespective of how the Court of Arbitration in Sport (CAS) delivers the verdict in her fight for a Paris Olympics medal.

Speaking to ANI, Vidushpat said, "Vinesh was represented by 4 lawyers. She is the applicant and United World Wrestling (UWW) and International Olympic Committee are the respondents and Indian Olympic Association is an interested party. We hope the decision will come in Vinesh's favour. She is a champion no matter what CAS's verdict is and should be respected like one."

Phogat, who had been disqualified from the Paris Olympics final for slightly exceeding the weight limit, announced her retirement from wrestling following the incident. She had reached the gold medal match by defeating Cuba's Yusneylis Guzman Lopez 5-0 in the semi-finals. She was set to face Sarah Ann Hildebrandt of the United States for the gold but was disqualified for the weight limit breach.

Following her disqualification from women's 50 kg final at the Olympics, Phogat requested CAS to award her the silver medal. The verdict is expected to come out by 9.30 pm. *—ANI*

'TURNED DOWN'

We didn't even get the desired coach: Ashwini

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Ashwini Ponnappa *PHOTO: ANI*

Indian doubles badminton specialist Ashwini Ponnappa on Tuesday said she received little to no individual financial assistance from the sports ministry in the build up to Paris Olympics and even her request for a coach was turned down ahead of the just-concluded Games.

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) had come out with a document, detailing the financial support provided to the Paris-bound Indian athletes. It mentions that Ashwini was provided Rs 4,50,000 under TOPS and Rs 1,48,04,080 under Annual calender for Training and Competition (ACTC), which included the procurement of Game Ready recovery equipment, international competitions and sparring partner in the Tokyo cycle.

"I'm absolutely shocked.. I don't mind not getting money but telling the nation that I got money is ridiculous. I haven't received it. Like if you're talking about national camp, then that 1.5 Crore is spent on all the campers," Ashwini told PTI.

"I don't have a specific coach. As for my personalised trainer, I'm paying for him myself. I'm not taking money from anyone. I've played on my own until November (2023)."

"You can't say I've been given Rs 1.5 crore, if it's over four years, fair enough," she said. *—PTI*

Manu aims for multiple Olympic medals

NEW DELHI, 13 AUG

Manu Bhaker *PHOTO: ANI*

Ace Indian pistol shooter Manu Bhaker has set her sights on winning multiple medals at the Olympics in the future following her historic feat at the Paris Games.

The 22-year-old scripted history to become the first Indian athlete in post-independence era to win two Olympic medals in a single edition of the Games. Bhaker won a bronze each in the women's 10m air pistol and 10m air pistol mixed team event -- where she had paired with Sarabjot Singh.

She also came close to winning a third bronze in 25m pistol before finishing a creditable fourth in Paris. No Indian athlete has won more than two individual medals at the Olympics. "I think we all work hard to win medals. But if that happens (winning more than 2 individual medals at Olympics) then that would be great. The aim is to work hard and better this performance in the future," Bhaker told PTI Videos.

"(I am) aiming to win many more Olympic medals for India," added Bhaker, who returned to the country after participating in the closing ceremony. "Being the flag bearer was the opportunity of a lifetime, I am grateful that I got this opportunity and will cherish this for a lifetime," she said. Bhaker had returned to India last week but had flown back to Paris for the closing ceremony were she was the joint-flagbearer. *—PTI*

Olympian Arshad Nadeem gets Rs 1 crore & car

Men's javelin gold medalist, Arshad Nadeem, of Pakistan poses for a photo with his mother inside his house, in Khanewal, Pakistan *PHOTO: PTI*

LAHORE, 13 AUG

Olympic javelin throw champion Arshad Nadeem was on Tuesday rewarded with 10 million rupees and a brand new car by the Punjab government for his historic gold medal-winning feat in the just-concluded Paris Games.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz handed Nadeem the cash prize and the car keys when she visited Nadeem's village in Mian Chunnu to meet him and his family.

"Arshad deserves everything he gets because he has brought so much joy and pride to the nation," she said.

Flanked by Nadeem's parents, the CM handed the keys of the new car to the athlete with a special number plate of 92.97 which is the distance he threw to set a new Olympic record while winning gold in Paris on 8 August.

The deputy commissioner, who accompanied Maryam Nawaz, said that the cheque and car were all prepared in record time on the instructions of the CM who wanted to meet Nadeem.

"She gave orders for the special number plate as well," he said.

The Chief Minister also gave away a cheque of 50 lakh rupees to Nadeem's coach Salman Iqbal Butt before flying back to Lahore.

Nadeem became the first track and field athlete from Pakistan to clinch an Olympic gold medal with his stunning 92.97m effort in the men's javelin throw final. *—PTI*

Chiles medal inquiry: USA says arbitration panel won't reconsider decision

Jordan Chiles *PHOTO: AP*

WASHINGTON, 13 AUG

USA Gymnastics officials say an arbitration panel won't reconsider a decision asking gymnast Jordan Chiles to return the bronze medal she was awarded in the floor exercise at the Paris Olympics.

USA Gymnastics says it will continue efforts to let Chiles keep the medal.

"USA Gymnastics was notified by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) on Monday that their rules do not allow for an arbitral award to be reconsidered even when conclusive new evidence is presented," USA Gymnastics said in a statement. "We are deeply disappointed by the notification and will continue to pursue every possible avenue and appeal process, including to the Swiss Federal Tribunal, to ensure the just scoring, placement, and medal award for Jordan."

CAS voided an on-floor appeal from Chiles' coach that vaulted her to third, saying the appeal came 4 seconds beyond the one-minute time limit for scoring inquiries.

USA Gymnastics disputed the timing, saying Sunday that the agency submitted video evidence to CAS that showed Team USA coach Cecile Landi first appealed 13 seconds before the deadline. The International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) said Saturday night it would respect the court's decision and elevate Ana Barbosu of Romania to third. The International Olympic Committee confirmed the ruling Sunday, announcing that it was reallocating the medal.

CAS ruled Saturday that Landi's inquiry to have 0.1 added to Chiles' score came outside the one-minute window. *—AP*

NEW OFFSIDE TECHNOLOGY

This EPL will have a different look when the season starts on Friday

LONDON, 13 AUG

For the 2024-25 season starting on Friday, there are five newly hired managers, around $1.6 billion worth of new players (and counting), new offside technology, updated financial regulations and a tweaked match schedule.

Coaching changes

A quarter of the coaches will be taking charge of a Premier League game for the first time, with Liverpool (Arne Slot), Chelsea (Enzo Maresca) and Brighton (Fabian Hurzeler) all having new managers and both Southampton (Russell Martin) and Ipswich (Kieran McKenna) gaining promotion with managers owning no top-flight experience.

Slower market

The Premier League's 20 clubs have spent as much on new players in this transfer window as those in Spain, Italy and Germany combined, according to transfermarkt.com. So why does it feel such a slow summer of trading? Maybe because there have been no blockbuster deals, with the most expensive being striker Dominic Solanke moving to Tottenham from Bournemouth for 65 million pounds ($83 million).

Liverpool players during a practice match *PHOTO:X/@PREMIERLEAGUE*

Semi-automated offsides

Expect offside decisions to be reached much quicker in the Premier League this season. The premiere league committee has decided to introduce semi-automated offside technology for the first time, with the new system set to be launched during the first half of the season.

Spending rules

Last season in the Premier League was notable for some clubs, like Everton and Nottingham Forest, receiving points deductions for breaking the competition's profitability and sustainability regulations, which are now being more strictly applied. This coming season is the final year of those regulations, with two new forms of spending caps being trialed ahead of their introduction from the 2025-26 season. Teams in England's top division will trial a "Squad Cost Rules" system, which will limit spending on players to 85% of a club's soccer revenue and net profit or loss on player sales.

No winter break

The Premier League is renowned for being a relentless slog — even more so this season. There's no winter break for clubs this time, with the season starting later, to give players more time to recover from international tournaments this summer, and therefore being squeezed. *—AP*

BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

Ponting backs Aus to hand India 3-1 defeat

DUBAI, 13 AUG

Ricky Ponting *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Ricky Ponting believes Australia will have a "point to prove" after two straight Test series defeats at home against India and backed the Pat Cummins-led side to win the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy 3-1 come November-December.

India, who have returned victorious in both their previous Test assignments Down Under with identical margins of 2-1, will take on the world No.1 Australia in a five-Test series starting on November 22.

"It's going to be a competitive series. Australia has got a bit of a point to prove against India in Australia on the back of what happened the last the last two series here," Ponting told 'The ICC Review'.

"We are back to (having) five Tests as well, which is the other really important thing about this series. It has only been four Tests the last couple of time. I'm obviously going to tip Australia to win and I'm never going to tip against Australia. There will be a draw somewhere and there will be some bad weather somewhere, so I'm going to say 3-1 to Australia," he added.

India and Australia have not played a five-Test series after their bilateral affairs came to be known as the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Before that, in 1991-92, India had toured Australia for a five-Test series.

Ponting backed India's left-arm seamer Khaleel Ahmed, whom he coached in the IPL at Delhi Capitals, to be a part of India's touring party. *—PTI*